00038316

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 February, 2016

FIVE YEARS IN THE EAST,

BY

R. N. HUTTON.

383
648

This is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
The first, best country, ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind.

GOLDSMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS.
1847.

915
Hut / fix
38316

CIRENCESTER:
PRINTED BY BAILY AND JONES.

PREFACE.

"WHETHER," says a well-known writer "it is "perfectly consistent in an author to solicit the "indulgence of the public, though it may stand "first in his wishes, admits a doubt; for, if his "productions will not bear the light, it may be "said, why does he publish? but if they will, "there is no need to ask a favour."

This, however, I am in self-defence compelled to do, for this reason, that in addition to whatever other imperfections there may be from the notes having been originally made without any view to publication, I am also labouring under the disadvantage of having had a collection of sketches of almost every place I have visited, entirely spoilt, with the exception of two, for

which I am indebted to the kindness of a friend. This is a loss which is more regretted now, than at the time of its occurrence, for a pencil sketch will always convey a more generally correct idea of the object represented than the most elaborate description of the pen can possibly do, but mutually assisting one another, the pen points out the individual beauties of a particular object, whilst the pencil grouping all "*en masse*," enables the mind to connect the various descriptions, and form a more accurate conception of the reality than can be conveyed by the unassisted pen.

It may, perhaps, be remarked that the title is contradicted by the commencement of the book, inasmuch as the date of the departure from England is fixed in July 1844, and that consequently the *five* years are reduced to little more than *three*. Some explanation is therefore necessary upon this point, as also to account for the circuitous route pursued by our

vessel, and the number of places visited without any apparent purpose.

In the first place then as regards the misapplication of title. The time actually occupied in performing the tour was upwards of five years, but as the various places were visited on different voyages, it would have been necessary to have gone over the same ground two or three times, or else to have omitted some portions. In order, therefore, to give some slight description of every part, and at the same time avoid useless repetition, I have assumed a somewhat unusual course, and have thrown the whole into one voyage, which has thus been made to comprise, not only a greater number of ports than a vessel would ever touch at in one passage, but also the events of others extending over upwards of five years.

Further, I have but to observe, that as so many writers of superior talent have already made the public familiar with Egypt, and left

nothing for my humbler pen, I have not trespassed upon the pre-occupied ground with more than the passing observations of an Overland Passenger, but have confined myself principally to those parts with which I am more familiar from a five years' acquaintance with the greater part of them.

In conclusion I would crave indulgence for any imperfections of composition which may grate harshly on the ears of those who have been accustomed to the easy-flowing sentences of abler pens, and trust that I may not be condemned for not having accomplished what I never presumed to attempt. My object in the following pages is to give simply a matter of fact account of places and people, without any additions from my own imagination, further than an occasional expression of opinion or feelings upon any particular subject; and if I have succeeded in this, I have accomplished all that I profess, and may therefore beg the

reader who is disposed to criticise, to bear in mind that he must

> In every work regard the writer's end,
> Since none can compass more than they intend,
> And if the means be just, the conduct true,
> Applause, in spite of trivial faults is due.
>
> POPE.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. PAGE.

New Acquaintances. — Getting under Weigh. — Going down Channel.—Last of the English Land.—Bay of Biscay and its Consequences.—Dinner under Difficulties.—Occupation of Time at Sea.—Porpoises.—Boneta.—Method of Fishing..... 1

CHAPTER II.

A Funeral at Sea.—Sailors' Superstitions.—Raising the Wind.—Nautical Time.—Lascar Charm against Sickness.—The Forecastle Ghost.—Sunday at Sea.—Sea Life in the Tropics.—Falling Stars.—Yarns in the Middle Watch.—A Calm.—Exchange Signals with Jupiter.—Crossing the Line..... 27

CHAPTER III.

Ascension.—First Appearance of Land.—Turtle.—Government of Ascension.—Want of Water.—The Town and Public Buildings.—Absence of Vegetation.—Opthalmia.—Fishing.—Turtles' Eggs.—Excursions at Night.—Pic-nic to the Green Mountain.—Dampier's Springs.—View from the Top.—Iter ad Astra.—Up in the Clouds.—Pirate's Cave.—Important Event.—Gannet Fair.—Boat Race.—Ball on Board. Polka under Difficulties.—Rollers.—Geography.... 56

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE.

St. Helena.—First Appearance.—James Town.—Ladder Hill.—Defences.—Diana's Peak.—Climate.—Napoleon's Grave.—Longwood.—First Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope—and Passage to India—Westerly Gale.—Table Mountain.—Lion's Head—The Table Cloth.—Town and Hotels.—Constantia. Fishing.—Different Currents of Wind in the Bay.... 88

CHAPTER V.

Difference of Temperature in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.—Speaking a Vessel.—Curious Appearance preceding the S. E. Trade.—Johanna.—First Appearance.—King's Pilot.—Peerage fallen low.—Majesty Burlesqued.—The Palace and Royal Splendour.—The Duke.—Letter from Queen Victoria.—The Town.—Primitive Iron Foundry.—Departure. 116

CHAPTER. VI.

Calcutta.—The Sandheads.—Diamond Harbour.—James and Mary.—Pilot Service.—Garden Reach.—Fort William.—Marriage Traffic.—The City and the West End.—Palkees.—Tank Square.—Black Hole.—Natural Scavengers.—Botanical Gardens.—A Bore.—Hindoo Mythology.—Festival in Honour of Shivu.—Caste.—Marriage..... 148

CHAPTER VII.

Passage down the Hooghly.—Indications of a Storm.—Reefing.—A Hurricane.—Repairing Damages..... 180

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE.

Java.—Sunda Straits.—The Village of Anjier.—Its Governor.—Military Duties.—Wreck of the Inglis.—Caprice of Javanese Taste.—Productions of Java.—Fruits, Mangosteen, Custard Apple—The Upas Tree.—Nutmeg Plant.—Edible Birds'-nests.—Entrance to Batavia.—Coral Islands.—Trade.—Town.—Climate.—Eastern Passage..... 199

CHAPTER IX.

Eastern Passage.—A Water Spout.—Luminousness of the Sea.—Its probable cause.—Squall.—Straits of Salaya.—Bouton.—Pirates.—Calm.—Gillolo Passage..... 233

CHAPTER X.

China.—Approach to it.—Pilots.—Hong Kong.—Policy of taking it.—Macao.—Its appearance from the Sea compared with its real state.—Temple.—Camöen's Cave.—The Bogue.—Passage to Whampoa.—Rice Cultivation.—Absence of Pasture Ground.—Climate.—Cause of Excess of Heat and Cold.—Pagoda Hill.—Boat Population.—Chinese Temple..... 248

CHAPTER XI.

China.—Approach to Canton.—Junks.—Discovery of the Mariner's Compass.—Gunpowder and Printing.—Steam not wanted.—Mode of Printing.—Boat Population.—Condition of their Lower Orders compared with ours.—Chinese character.—First Land-

PAGE.

ing.—Commissionaires.—Portable Barber's Shop.—Murder Committed in the Open Street.—Shopping.—Streets.—Hog Lane.—Population of Canton and China. — Hotel. — Smuggling. — Opium Trade.—Ducks.—Taking in a Tea Cargo..... 287

FIVE YEARS IN THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES—GETTING UNDER WEIGH—GOING DOWN CHANNEL—LAST OF THE ENGLISH LAND—BAY OF BISCAY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—DINNER UNDER DIFFICULTIES—OCCUPATION OF TIME AT SEA—PORPOISES—BONETA—METHOD OF FISHING.

> Illi robur et æs triplex
> Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci
> Commisit pelago ratem
> Primus; ———————

The first of July, 1844, found the good ship "Worcester" amongst the number of outward bounders lying in the Downs, and from this point we propose to commence our voyage; for although the passage down the river might afford us many opportunities of describing the effect produced

upon our minds by seeing them (for aught we can tell) for the last time, still we wish to confine ourselves to actual facts, and not to indulge in any high-flown vagaries of imagination. Such being our intention, we shall say nothing of the many objects of interest which lie between Gravesend and Margate, being well aware that the whole of the time during the passage down, is well taken up with uncording boxes, lashing them in their places, fixing hooks and pegs in every direction, arranging shelves, and otherwise making ready for sea, before the vessel begins to have that disagreeable motion, which not only endangers the safety of all articles which are not properly secured in their places, but also deprives the unfortunate landsman of the power, or, as some may be pleased to call it, the disposition to do any more. The point at which this sensation of unsteadiness begins to be felt, varies of course according to the state of the weather, but, generally speaking, it may be expected a few miles below "The Nore." The motion here is of course very slight, and

hardly perceptible, but still it is just sufficient to convince you that you are not now upon *terra firma.*

In the present instance however, the weather being particularly fine, there was nothing to interfere with the satisfactory arrangement of the cabins, and even the Downs were reached without a single unhappy looking face. So calm was the day, that the vessel was unable to proceed without the assistance of a steam tug, which is usually employed only in the narrow parts of the river, where the width is not sufficient to allow a large ship to manœuvre under sail, and the beauty of the summer sky, so free from clouds as to allow the warmth of the sun to be felt in its full power, infused a cheerfulness into every one on board. As we shall not, perhaps, have so good an opportunity again, we will take advantage of the delay caused by anchoring here, to make the reader acquainted with the principal persons individually, as well as with the crew "*en masse.*" Our party aft consisted of, imprimis, the captain and his wife,

a young lady going out to India, the first and second officers, the surgeon, and your humble servant myself, making a snug little party of seven. The rest comprised the other officers, the usual assortment of midshipmen, cook, butcher, carpenter, &c. and the *sine nomine turba*, the men before the mast, or in other words the sailors, of whom half were Europeans and the rest Lascars; a more miscellaneous assortment could not well be conceived, than that which was to be found amongst our five and forty seamen, the muscular Englishman contrasting strongly with the light active form of the Lascar, and the apathetic sluggishness of the heavy Dutchman, with the happy mercurial disposition of the light hearted Irishman; we mustered no less than fifteen different breeds—first came the four from our own country, English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh, two Maltese, one Dutchman, one Swede, one French, and one American, a Portuguese cook, two of the regular woolly-headed thick-lipped sons of Africa, Bengalleese, Malays, and four Chinamen; added to these our surgeon

was from the land of the far west, being a native of Jamaica—so that we did not present a very bad imitation of a floating Babel; confusion of tongues we certainly had, and as many spoke no language but their own, an interpreter was in constant requisition; this was found in the person of the Burra Tindal (the chief boatswain's mate of the Lascars), who, in addition to his acquirements in languages, was also a genius in his way, and was always resorted to if any thing was broken, a bird cage to be made, a wicker basket formed, or any thing in the tailoring department done. He certainly had the faculty of making himself understood, for if an unfortunate fellow did not readily comprehend, he was sure of an application of rope's end to quicken his intellect; by these means, and having a very tolerable smattering of all languages, there was no difficulty in communicating through him with any one on board, except the two Africans, whose language no one knew, and in fact it was very much doubted whether they had any, for no one had ever heard them speak,

or produce any rational sounds, beyond a species of grunt, which, varying in its intonation, was expressive of either happiness or the contrary, approaching almost to a howl to indicate pain. One in particular, appeared so utterly devoid of intellect, as to be unable to do the simplest things, and if it had rested with him to get his own dinner ready, it is more than probable that he would have gone without. This poor old creature afforded infinite amusement to the rest of the ship's company, by a grotesque dance which he would occasionally perform, apparently with great delight to himself, and endeavour by signs to make the others understand that it was intended to be a war dance, representing the manner in which a prisoner is killed and danced over. This strange specimen of humanity is since dead, and there is little doubt that his death was mainly owing to the impossibility of discovering his sensations, or obtaining the information which must come from the patient himself. The other was a merry bullet-headed nigger, with a skin as black as ebony, short wool

for hair, and beautifully white teeth glistening between his heavy lips, without a thought or care, but as happy as the day was long. One other person should have come under the denomination of "principal people," and this was the Serang, or Lascar boatswain, who having been to England two or three times before, not only spoke very decent English, but had also become so Anglicised as to prefix a Mr. to his name, in which small piece of harmless vanity he was indulged, and always addressed as Mr. Wedger Alley.

His dress on grand occasions was fantastic and extravagant, but, though all the colours of the rainbow were to be found in the numerous shawls and silks which he disposed about his person, still there was a certain degree of taste displayed in the arrangement, which gave the *toute ensemble* a very good effect; two massive chains hung round his neck, to one of which were attached his keys, whilst the other suspended his silver pipe. A small pouch, containing his English watch, completed his attire, and rendered him a valuable

person, if not for his acquirements, at any rate for his dress. Added to this he was a first-rate sailor, and although on ordinary occasions he would not condescend to touch a rope himself, yet if any thing was necessary to be done, but attended with so much danger as to require a great degree of personal courage even to attempt it, the Serang was the first to set the example.

But it is now time to return to the ship, and proceed from the point to which we have brought her. Once more then let us date our commencement from the 1st of July; on the morning of which our sleep was broken in upon at the early hour of four, by the shrill whistle of the boatswain's pipe, followed by a roar from his stentorian lungs, which, to use a vulgar expression, rather resembled the sound produced by a bull bellowing through a brass trumpet, than any effort of the human voice. Being unaccustomed to such noises, we failed to detect any single word which would serve as a clue to the rest of the sentence, but the bustle consequent thereon, together with the repetition thereof

by small boys, who going round to the cabins occupied by the different officers, announced to them individually the order in a more gentle tone, proved it to be "all hands up anchor." Sleep after this is entirely out of the question, for any one at least who has been always accustomed to pass the night in peace, for the very possibility of further indulgence therein is entirely precluded by the combination of noises immediately over head; the coiling of heavy ropes, shrill screaming of the pipes at short intervals, the rude singing of the men, and the heavy stamp-and-go, and above all the deafening clat-clat of the capstan itself, are sufficient not only to keep the unfortunate landsman awake, but generally compel him to come up on deck, as the only means of escaping from the distracting din; once there all seems comparatively quiet, and all sensation of noise is lost in the excitement of the scene; the annoying monotony of the stamp-and-go is now heard with pleasure, and the before grumpy passenger will find himself walking the deck to the same step, and perhaps

even going so far as to allow himself to be so carried away with the song, as to join in the chorus with a hum to himself, or perhaps a low whistle.

Being unwilling to perplex the reader with technicalities, we will suppose the effect of all this singing and stamping to be, that the anchor is got up to the bows, without any description of the means employed; referring any one that may wish for a more particular description thereof, to any of the thousand and one volumes of sea tales and voyages, in which such performances are described at full length; neither do we propose to talk of "yards swarming with men," or "canvas fluttering for a few moments in graceful festoons ere it was distended to the yard beneath." Such a poetical mode of setting sail is far above us, and we prefer confining ourselves to the simple fact that the sail was set, in the ordinary manner, and we were now fairly started on our voyage.

The sun was just rising behind us, and its rays thrown horizontally, shone bright against the white chalk cliffs of the South Foreland, which we were

now rapidly passing, under the united influence of the ebb tide and a fair wind. A very short time hid it from our view, and Beachy Head was seen rising in the distance. Nothing could be more delightful than the passage so far, and with such an auspicious commencement we could not but hope a favourable termination to our voyage. Were it not that we had read in newspapers, so many accounts of dreadful shipwrecks in the Channel, we could never have believed that so much danger could have existed, in the very same place where we now saw the water so beautifully smooth, and the land so high and clear, that it seemed hardly possible not to be able to distinguish it; but if instead of going down in July with wind and tide, we had found ourselves beating up against both in November, when we should have perhaps been sailing through a fog of the substance of pea soup, without being able to see from one end of the ship to the other, with a strong south easterly gale blowing, we should have altered our tone, and most likely gone into the other extreme

of not being able to imagine that it could ever present the appearance, which we were now beholding with so much pleasure. What it might have been in November, was however of no importance to us who were now experiencing what it was in July, and certainly had we been allowed to choose our own weather we could not have improved it. Even the sailors, who were never known to be contented with anything, and let the wind blow from what quarter it will, always wish it would come a little more to some other point, were obliged to admit themselves satisfied.

Before we retired to bed that evening, the bright light on St. Catharine's was visible like a star in the horizon; and by daylight on the following morning, we were approaching the Bill of Portland. Twenty four hours more brought us down as far as the Start, with the last view of which we bid farewell to the English land, and were now fairly at sea and solely dependent upon the compass, and navigation, for finding our way across the broad waters, where no beaten track or

finger posts are found to point out the proper road.

Though no one can tell whether it will ever be permitted him to return to his native land, and see again those friends that he has so lately left, the disappearance of the last of the English land, as it gradually sinks from the view, generally fails to create those feelings which it is usually supposed to do; with those who are accustomed to the sea life, habit has rendered leaving home one of the common course of events, and with those who are now quitting it for the first time, the novelty and excitement will cause them rather to look forward with anticipations of pleasure to the new scenes they are about to witness, than think of those they have left behind. It is not till afterwards that the thoughts will wander home, when after some few months of absence the novelty has subsided, and we begin to contrast the want of comforts, which we every day perceive more and more, with the abundance of them at home; when we feel the loss of the friendship

whose warmth we did not appreciate rightly before; when perhaps to set this comparison in a stronger light, we have received no letters at the expected time, and therefore think more constantly of those from whom we had hoped to hear; or when suffering from sickness we think we may never see it again; it is then that our hearts will yearn towards home, and then that we feel that love of our native land which the last sight of its fading hills now fails to awake.

Here then we are fairly launched upon the blue water, and in the dreaded "Bay of Biscay O," where much to the surprize of an ignorant landsman like myself, we found the water very nearly as smooth as it had been all the way down Channel, save that a slight rise and fall was now perceptible, owing to a little swell, which is at all times to be found in so large a body of water as the Atlantic: so gentle and slow was the motion however, that it in no way interfered with the enjoyment of our dinners and the terrible and much talked of Bay, was passed with as much ease and comfort as if it had

been merely a large mill pond; to counterbalance this agreeable surprise we were however doomed to suffer a disappointment, for when we thought that the only part of our voyage where there was any probability of a rough sea was passed, we discovered to our sorrow that we had been rather premature in our self-congratulations, for on the evening of the second day after we had left the land, our fine steady northerly wind suddenly failed us, and after flying about in all directions for an hour or two, finally settled in the S. W. quarter, precisely at the very point towards which we wanted to go. The actual force of wind was not great, but still it was sufficient to roll up a little tumbling sea, and impart to the ship a motion which was far from pleasant, and speedily sent us landsmen down below, with very unhappy looking faces, to have our first and last taste of sea sickness. Many have been the devices for preventing, and as numerous the remedies for counteracting the effects of, this most disagreeable malady; but all are alike useless, and some still

worse, for they not only fail to diminish, but on the contrary, rather tend to increase the suffering of the unfortunate patient. The only thing to be done is to let it take its course, and think as little about the matter as possible: As soon however as an application of bason has become necessary, great relief will be felt, and then a small quantity of strong brandy and water, with (if possible) a little biscuit, will strengthen the stomach, and the effect of the sickness pass off in a very short time. The great error in all the remedies before mentioned, is the very fact of their being preventatives, for although they do not keep it off entirely, yet they delay the action which produces the greatest relief so long, that the unfortunate victim to these "infallible cures" is made to suffer the worst part of the sensation, ten times as long as he would if nature were left to take her own course; for depend upon it she will not be contented until you are sick, and therefore since it must come sooner or later, the best course is to have it over as soon as possible, and then take whatever your

fancy may suggest as the best thing for comforting under affliction. People generally treasure up a string of remedies, all of which are equally unavailable, but speaking from experience we would recommend, as the only thing that ever does the least good, a little strong brandy and water, cold, without sugar, or if the patient be a lady who cannot take that, the next best thing is a glass of sherry, the former is certainly preferable; but as for anything else, or even hot brandy and water, which some consider must be better than cold, they are all of not the slightest use whatever. It is, however, to be borne in mind, that this is not a preventative, but only a remedy *after* the sickness has taken place. Where then is the use? you may ask, to which we reply, that inasmuch as sick you must be, all that remains to be done is to devise the best manner of getting over it as soon as possible, there is the use, and that is the advantage, which is derived soonest from this brandy and cold water cure.

For the next two days we made little progress,

owing to the wind still remaining in the south-west, which obliged us to perform a zig-zag motion, not unlike that by means of which a single horse with a heavy phaeton gets up a steep hill, and which is termed by sailors tacking, in addition to which the head sea made the old ship pitch so much, that she went on her way but slowly. This was excessively uncomfortable, for although see-saw across a tree is a very favourite amusement with boys at school, yet a rise and fall of about twenty feet, accompanied by a roll at the same time is by no means pleasant, and the more disagreeable from being obliged to eat one's dinner in continual fear of a leg of mutton coming bounding across the table into one's face, or a tureen of soup streaming into one's lap, or perhaps by way of variation the distance between yourself and the table is suddenly found to be considerably increasing, and to your no small annoyance, all eyes are turned to watch you slide away, soup plate in hand, to the other side of the vessel. Few things require more skilful management than the

common operation of eating dinner, when the ship happens to be rolling heavily, in fact the only way to get on with soup, is to hold the plate in the hand, and watching the flux and reflux of the liquid, endeavour to keep it as level as possible. A proper use of the knees is also essential to keep the chair in its place, so that altogether it is no easy matter to get on with this dinner under difficulties. Wine glasses and decanters are placed upon a swinging tray suspended from the deck over head, which moves with the ship so that they are always safe, but the most difficult feat to perform, is to take wine with any one at the time that you have a plate of meat before you; both hands are of course engaged, one with the glass, and the other with the decanter, so that the knife and fork are left to themselves, and very often plate and all run over to your next neighbour's lap, who inwardly blesses you for the liberal allowance of gravy that is streaming down his cloth trousers.

This state of affairs luckily did not last long, for on the third day the wind kindly drew round again

to its old quarter, and we were once more blessed with a delightful bright sun and clear sky. A good day's run of 220 miles made a great alteration in our latitude, and put us fairly in the regions of the sunny skies, and out of all danger of gales.

Now that the ship had become steady again, and there really was a possibility of walking about, without being obliged to cling to everything for support, we began to turn our attention to the means of passing the day pleasantly. Our routine was pretty much the same, breakfast at nine, dinner at half-past three, and tea at six, with biscuit and grog at twelve, and grog and biscuit at eight. The intervals between were generally filled up with backgammon, which was our favourite amusement from being able to play on deck, and exercise for the sake of health, which consisted in a two or three mile walk up and down the main deck, 70 turns being found to be equal to one mile. Backgammon, though a most delightful game, will at last become tiresome if played to too

great an extent, and we were therefore compelled to devise some other amusement, which we at length did, in the keeping a sort of chronicle of events, and memorabilia, from which the present volumes are compiled, and establishing a weekly paper which was published every Sunday morning, consisting of short tales and sketches, rendered as amusing as the limited powers of its contributors would permit. By these means the time was at any rate prevented from hanging heavy on our hands, and though the productions may not have evinced much talent, yet they sometimes created much amusement, and tended to promote good humour amongst us.

Having by this time become sufficiently accustomed to the motion of the ship, to be able to walk straight without making diversions with every roll, which acquirement is technically termed "having sea legs aboard" we began to pay some little attention to nautical affairs, and were initiated by the boatswain, with whom we made great friends by means of a glass of grog now and

then, in all the mysteries of the various terms, and instructed as to sundry points, by the ignorance of which a landsman is always betrayed, even though he should put on the white trousers and tarpawling hat of a regular jack. Not thinking it right however that we should obtain our information in so easy a manner, he one day suggested that we should go up aloft, and take a look round us, which we accordingly did, and commenced ascending the rigging, as we thought, in a seamanlike manner; but no sooner had we attained the height of some twelve or fourteen feet from the deck, than two of the men came up after us, and passing a piece of small cord round our feet to the rigging, prevented our either going any further, or coming down again; on enquiring the object of this, we were informed that it was a custom practised upon all who ascended the first time, and that the only means of obtaining a release was by a gallon of rum, or its equivalent, we accordingly gave them five shillings, which enabled us to prosecute our rambles aloft with impunity for ever after.

Hardly a day passed now, without something occuring to relieve the monotony, for if the breeze was fresh we were surrounded by shoals of porpoises, which afforded us capital sport in endeavouring to harpoon them as they passed under the bows; for no matter how fast the ship is sailing, they will always contrive to cross at a distance of two or three feet from the cutwater, or perhaps keep just a little ahead, plunging, jumping, and frolicking about as if they derived pleasure from the excitement, and liked the troubling of the water, occasioned by the rapid motion of the vessel. One or two of the men who had been originally in whalers, were somewhat skilful with the harpoon, and succeeded in catching one, but the struggling of the poor creature, and the stain of its blood upon the water, frightened the others, and they went off in a different direction. Sailors have an idea that the porpoise always goes to meet the wind, and accordingly look for it in the quarter towards which a shoal of them is seen proceeding. There is no doubt some truth as the foundation of

this apparently absurd theory, and the saying has been the result of observation; but it is a singular coincidence, that the faculty of seeing the wind, should be ascribed also to the pig, between which animal and the porpoise there exist such similarities, that the latter is called the sea pig. The flesh of the porpoise is not unlike very coarse beef in appearance, and is considered by some people as very good for a change at sea, but tastes of course differ very much, as it certainly did not at all agree with ours, and although it was tried for curiosity sake, was universally condemned.

A few days afterwards, we were suddenly called on deck by hearing a great splashing in the water, and on rushing out saw some thousands of fish, jumping about, some of them leaping to the height of five or six feet from the surface. Lines and hooks were instantly in requisition, and in a very short space of time we had a dozen of the fish on board. They proved to be boneta, and when cooked for dinner were very good. The manner of fishing for them is somewhat singular, the bait

is either a piece of white rag, or a wax candle moulded into the form of a flying fish with feathers for the wings, one end of the line is then made fast to the jibboom, and a pocket handkerchief tied by two corners to the other end, at a distance of about three or four feet from the hook, which acts as a sail, and carries the bait away from the ship, to the full extent of the line; the check thus given to it allows the hook to drop, by which means the line again becomes slack, and the handkerchief filling with wind lifts it out of the water, and carries it away until again checked; so that the bait is constantly dipping in the water, but never remaining sufficiently long to sink; the only art of the fisherman is to watch the fish jump at the bait, and give a pretty smart jerk to fix the hook well in, and then haul up as fast as possible. These, like most of the other deep sea fish, are sometimes unwholesome, which is supposed to be tested by putting a piece of silver in the pot with them, and if the sixpence on being taken out is bright, they are good; but if it should be at all

discoloured, they are considered doubtful and thrown away, or perhaps eaten only by a few, who determine to "chance it," and very often get a good dinner, without any bad effects. A whole ship's company has however been known to be taken ill after eating plentifully of these fish.

CHAPTER II.

A FUNERAL AT SEA.—SAILORS' SUPERSTITIONS.—RAISING THE WIND.—NAUTICAL TIME.—LASCAR CHARM AGAINST SICKNESS. — THE FORECASTLE GHOST.—SUNDAY AT SEA.—SEA LIFE IN THE TROPICS.—FALLING STARS.—YARNS IN THE MIDDLE WATCH.—A CALM. — EXCHANGE SIGNALS WITH JUPITER.—CROSSING THE LINE.

No stone is raised
O'er the mariner's grave,
But the dark blue wave
Is his winding sheet;

And far away
From his native home,
The roar of the foam
Is his requiem.

We were aroused, at about seven o'clock in the morning, from that happy state of half consciousness which is between sleeping and being awake, by overhearing the surgeon making a report to the captain, that one of the seamen had fallen off the

topsail yard, and was killed. Instinctively jumping from our couch, we ran out on deck, and there found that the melancholy fact was too true, and that it was not merely a dream of our own fancy. The poor fellow was quite dead, for independently of a fall of nearly eighty feet, he had struck the side of his head against the sharp corner of a square piece of wood which was bound with iron, the edge of which had fractured his skull.

Nothing could now be of any avail, and it therefore only remained to prepare to bury him. This ceremony which was the first we ever witnessed, made so strong an impression upon our mind, and left behind it traces which have endured longer than those produced by many other circumstances, which should perhaps have had equal effect, that we can recall to our memory the most trifling incident that occurred, as well as if it had taken place but yesterday. We will not, however, enter into too minute detail, but merely give such slight description as shall be sufficient to convey the idea we wish to impart.

All work, except such as was absolutely necessary, having ceased, the decks were carefully swept, ropes coiled neatly down, and every thing put in the most perfect order by the Lascars, whilst the European portion of the crew were cleaning themselves. The sailmaker and his mates attend to the preparation of the body, which consists in sewing it up in the hammock, with two or three good sized shot at the feet, in order to make it sink. At the hour appointed for the funeral, the ship's bell is tolled, and the body is then brought up on a grating, and placed at the gangway, where it is covered with the Union Jack. During the whole of this preparation, the most perfect silence is maintained, and the decorum of behaviour which is shown at this rude funeral, by men whose natures are rough and generally thoughtless, evinces a much more proper feeling of respect for the dead, than the pomp and pageantry of the same ceremony on shore.

The service is read by the commander, and at the words "we therefore commit his body to the deep," the grating is allowed to slide into the

water, and is recovered after the service is over, by means of a rope attached to it for that purpose. Thus ends the seaman's career, in the element he loved the best, and without that affectation which he so thoroughly despises. The same manliness, which he himself has shewn through life, is the characteristic of his funeral; and the warmth of heart, for which a sailor is ever distinguished, is manifested in the depth of feeling which is plainly perceptible through the rough exterior of his messmates. His loss is regretted, and deeply so, but not with the whining of cant and hypocrisy, and if perchance a tear should stand in the eye of any one of those around him, it is the tear of a seaman, and shed in sincerity. For him no false-praising monument is raised,

No storied urns record who rests below,

his grave is the fathomless deep, and his epitaph a line in the log book.

There is something particularly impressive in a funeral at sea; the mournful tolling of the lonely bell; the gloom which pervades the ship, striking

the more forcibly from the contrast which it presents to the usual liveliness; and the thought which brings it nearer home to us, that one out of so few is gone; which cannot fail to excite reflection, aided as it is by the absence of other objects to divert the attention, or the bustle of worldly business to distract the thoughts. These things must produce a temporary effect upon the dullest mind, but for those who are naturally disposed to think, there is much more to be found worthy of contemplation in this ceremony. The hurry which is unavoidable, might suggest a better lesson on the precariousness of human life, than the delay which custom has prescribed on shore; for although death itself may be as quick in the one case as in the other, still there is the association of suddenness more intimately connected with the death at sea, when we consider that within the short space of a few *hours* only, from the time we saw the man in full health and vigour, all trace of him has been swept away; and that the hammock in which he slept last night, with the prospect of a life of many

years before him, is now the shroud which wraps him in his last long sleep.

Sailors have proverbially always been, and will most probably always be superstitious, and nothing could have induced any one of the men to have hung his hammock in the place which was now left vacant, although by doing so much more room might have been obtained; but rather than avail themselves of the increase of space, they would far rather have slept upon the deck itself. A few of the most gross of the superstitions of former times have exploded, and as the rising generation becomes better educated, it is to be hoped that they will all eventually disappear, but they have still a number of strange fancies to which they cling with astonishing pertinacity. Amongst these we may enumerate the supposition that whistling will raise the wind, in which idea it would appear that even officers participate, for we have repeatedly heard them giving vent to that peculiar description of low whistle, which in a calm is supposed to have the effect of raising a breeze. There are various

methods, all which are said to be infallible for causing the wind to blow, such as throwing a hat, or an old shoe, overboard; but there is one which is very generally acknowledged even by those who are above the grosser absurdities, namely, that after catching a shark the calm will not last more than twelve hours; strange as it may sound, this is really very often the case, but it is easily reducible to a more sensible form, if we presume that the continuance of the calm does not depend upon the catching of the shark, but that the catching of the fish is the consequence of his instinct informing him that the calm will not continue, and that therefore if he does not seize his prey at once it will be carried away from him by the approaching breeze. Whether it is the effect of instinct, or whether it is that the state of the atmosphere which causes the wind to ensue, has also any influence over the appetites of "the monsters of the deep," we cannot pretend to say, and we can therefore only state the fact, that we have often heard the observations made by others,

and also remarked it ourself, that in a continued calm, a shark will play round a bait for hours without touching it, but that just before the springing up of the breeze he will seize it voraciously. We do not wish to be understood to advocate the notion that the shark has anything whatever to do with the weather, which we of course know to be absurd, but we mention it as a singular circumstance, the reason of which we leave to others better qualified to give an opinion upon the subject, and merely state that we know it to be so, from having observed it so frequently.

There is also another peculiarity of seamen which is in close connection with superstition, namely, their determined opposition to all new systems or improvements, and the astonishing pertinacity with which old errors, long known and admitted to be so, are nevertheless maintained. (We speak now not of the Royal Navy, but of the Merchant Service.) Amongst the most ridiculous of the practices thus carefully preserved, is the absurd system of keeping the ship's journal by

what is called nautical time, the principle of which is that Sunday begins at noon of Saturday. The object of it is to make the day commence at twelve o'clock, at which time the position of the ship is determined, and all calculations are made, but the astronomical day also begins then, and would surely answer the purpose equally well. We have thus three separate modes of reckoning time, the civil, which begins at midnight; the astronomical, which begins at noon; and the nautical, which begins at noon of the day *before;* the consequence of which is, that noon of the 11th is the middle of it by the first, the commencement of it by the second, and the beginning of the 12th by the latter method.

To return once more to the superstitions of seamen. This does not appear to be a characteristic which is confined to British sailors alone, for even more is to be found amongst those of other nations, and especially in Lascars, of which the following is a curious instance. Shortly after our departure from England, a fatal disease broke out amongst them, which in many cases baffled all the

skill of the surgeon, and carried off a great number. After the loss of five or six, the rest consulted together, as to the best means of putting a stop to the sickness, which was making so much havoc amongst them. At the suggestion of the padrè, they assembled on the forecastle, and sitting down in a ring commenced a wild chaunt, each one in turn then said a prayer, a short response following after each. The next proceeding was to place a rupee in the centre of the ring, and burn a quantity of incense round it, the same wild chaunt continuing the whole time. The consecration of the rupee having been declared by the padrè to be completed, it was placed in a small wooden box, together with various cabalistical words written on strips of paper, and the whole was then conveyed with much ceremony to the masthead, upon which it was nailed. This they no doubt firmly believed would have the effect of putting a stop to the calamity, but it happened most unluckily for their belief, that another one died on the very next day.

Another very ludicrous circumstance arose from their superstition, which was this; one of the Bandadees, or Lascar cooks, had died of this disease, and was buried without much ceremony as he was no favourite with the rest, and was generally looked upon by them as a bad character. As no one cared for him, very little trouble was taken with his funeral, and the greater part of the usual forms were dispensed with, but a few days afterwards, some of the men declared that during the night they had seen his ghost, and so firmly were they persuaded of the fact, that they refused to go down below again. This apparition was supposed to be in consequence of the manner in which the body had been buried, and it was decided that the only way to get rid of it again, was to let the priest charm it out, and that they would have no rest until this was done. This point having been settled, a few of the boldest of the men, accompanied by the padré, went down below, and having lighted their incense, commenced what was considered the most powerful charm, which

consisted in explaining to the spirit, through the medium of a chaunt, that they were very sorry at not having buried him with due honours, but that if he would retire they would pray for him, but that on the other hand if he persisted in troubling them, they would invoke the most terrible curses upon his head; at which latter announcement the spirit is supposed to be so frightened, that he instantly departs. In this instance however he appeared to totally disregard their threats, for much to their surprise and terror, a sneeze was heard, and being now in their turn as much frightened as the rest, they rushed on deck, declaring that the spirit was the evil one himself, over whom they had no power. Whilst discussing the subject, and considering what could be done to expiate their offence, a grisly head was seen dimly through the smoke below, which on its emerging into the purer air above, proved to be that, not of his satanic majesty, but of a poor old man, who was employed to sweep the decks, or do other such light jobs; he was a miserable,

half-silly creature, who was driven about by the others, and feeling ill, had hid himself from their persecution in one of the dark corners below. This then proved to be the supposed ghost of the departed Bandadee, which had caused them so much uneasiness, and there is no doubt but that although he was insensible to a charm, he was made to feel the effect of sundry kicks and cuffs, for the terror of which he had been the unconscious cause.

It is often said, and moreover is doubtless believed by many of the would-be-good people on shore, that there is little or no religion to be found at sea; and they imagine that the Sunday is only distinguished from the rest of the week, by being only a day of idleness and sleep. To endeavour to rectify this error, we will give a slight sketch of the manner in which a Sunday is passed on board ship. At six o'clock in the morning the operation of holy-stoning* commences, and lasts for about an

* The operation of strewing sand over the decks and rubbing it with stones, to take any grease or dirt off. It is

hour, much to the annoyance of unfortunate passengers, who are lying below, and are thus disturbed, without there being the slightest possibility of dropping off to sleep again. This being finished, the deck is washed down and carefully swept, so that no particles of sand are left behind; the heat of the sun in warm climates renders it perfectly dry in a very short time, and the ropes are then coiled neatly down, in fanciful devices suggested by the ingenuity of the men, who take great pride in the neatness of that part of the vessel to which they belong. At eight they go to breakfast, and immediately afterwards commence cleaning themselves, which with many is no slight operation. By ten o'clock however it is generally over, and little knots assemble in the waist, or on the forecastle, to while away the time till five bells (half-past ten); meanwhile the carpenter and his

called holy-stoning, probably on account of its being always done on a Sunday morning. The stones are also called "Sailors' Bibles," from their shape resembling the common Bible, which might be another reason for calling them holy-stones.

mates are occupied in arranging benches upon the quarter deck, and covering a small table, or the capstan, with a Union Jack to serve for a pulpit; which process in technical language is termed "rigging the church." At half-past ten the bell is tolled for a few minutes, and all the ship's company assemble "aft," taking their places upon the various seats appointed for them. The service is then read by the commander, with the surgeon for clerk, and so far from there being that want of attention which some people falsely suppose is exhibited, Bishop Heber remarks in his journal, that he never remembered having performed the service with so much satisfaction to himself, or to so attentive a congregation, as he did from the rude pulpit on board the ship in which he went out to Calcutta.

The remainder of the day is spent by the greater part in reading, and by the others in basking in the sun, which if not a profitable mode of employing the time, is, to say the least of it, harmless, and renders them happy and contented for the

time; which is, at any rate, better than the manner in which the Sunday afternoon and evening are often spent on shore, by those whose education should have taught them better; which in too many cases consists in criticizing the merits of the sermon preached to them in the morning, or else (if indeed religious subjects are introduced at all) in interminable and worse than idle controversies, upon points which they do not understand, and whose only tendency is to foster the principles of self-sufficiency and dissent; and yet forsooth, these are the people who presume to take upon themselves the office of passing judgment upon others, and in their pretended christian spirit lament the want of religion at sea. To such we would say "first cast out the beam that is in thine own eye, and then thou shall see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye," but until that state of purity is attained, be content to believe that there is more distinction made, and more respect paid to the Lord's day at sea, than on shore, so far as outward behaviour goes; but of the sincerity of

the heart let no man presume to judge, for its workings are known only to him that made it.

We have, however, made so many digressions of late, that we have almost lost sight of our vessel, which is by this time some way upon her voyage, and rapidly increasing her distance from England, by the assistance of a steady N. E. trade. There would appear to be some magic in blue water, which is not possessed by that which flows in the neighbourhood of land, for no sooner do we find ourselves upon "the blue, the fresh, the ever free," than we suddenly acquire an elasticity of spirits for which we might elsewhere seek in vain. There is a sensation of freedom which is aroused by the simple fact of being far away from the close confinement and din of a city; the breeze comes to us here, not through a tainted atmosphere, but in all its purity and freshness, and there is a liveliness in all we see; the ship herself is dancing buoyantly over the waves, which break their crested tops against her side, and throw back a foam which sparkles as it reflects the bright

sun's rays. How well do those spirit stirring lines with which "*The Corsair*" opens, convey the idea of the wild delight of a sea life, and how well is the feeling which we would wish to describe, contained in

> Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
> And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
> The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
> That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?

Notwithstanding the thousands of sea tales which have been written, all giving, more or less, a description of the mode of life, there is perhaps no common subject upon which stay-at-home travellers are more generally in error, than in anything connected with the sea. With foreign countries they become intimately acquainted, and know the customs, manners, and mode of life, of every nation under the sun; they may also have as correct an idea of the awful grandeur of a storm, as can be conveyed to them by any description of what is indescribable; but with regard to the more common matter-of-fact affairs of sea life, they are comparatively ignorant, because so few

writers ever think that they can possibly be interested by the relation. The sea being thus always painted for them in all its horrors, they become so accustomed to look at the dark picture, that they cannot fail to associate it with storms, and consequently think the two inseparable. Those that derive their ideas of the sea from such descriptions only, cannot understand how there can be any thing like enjoyment or pleasure upon so unstable an element, but picture to themselves an incessant roll, roll, roll, from the time that the land is left, until they are once more safely placed on *terra firma;* and are inclined to be rather incredulous when they are informed that, for a great part of the distance, the motion of the vessel is so slight as to be hardly perceptible; that writing, drawing, and painting, can be pursued with as perfect ease as on shore; and moreover, that in large ships the evenings are spent in dancing; but look upon the whole as a pleasant fiction, which deserves only to be classed under the head of travellers' tales. It is, never-

theless, a fact, and few things are more delightful than a fine evening in the tropics, when the ship, although sailing at the rate of 180, or 190, miles a day, is nevertheless going through the water as smoothly as if she were laying quietly at an anchor; the sails are all asleep before the steady breeze, everything is in its place, and the whole ship is in the most perfect order; then there is the sun, setting with a splendour never seen in this country, sinking clear and bright to the last, and leaving behind it such a magnificent arrangement of colours, so beautifully blending together, and each so superb in itself, such as no human art can accurately imitate. Then again there is the night so beautiful in the tropics, where thousands of stars glitter with a brightness that makes them appear to be of larger dimensions than those in our own country; and the moon herself shedding a stronger, but a softer light, makes us almost regret to leave the deck. Here too are seen in their splendour those meteoric phenomena called shooting stars, which seem to be some of the

myriads which bedeck the heavens dislodged from their places, and hurled into the sea.

These falling stars have been supposed by some to portend bad weather, and we remember having seen a statement, which, after giving a number of instances of their being observed to be the forerunners of gales, went so far as to reduce their courses to a fixed law, by saying that they were always found to proceed *towards* the quarter *from* which the gale was to be expected. This theory however appears to be more ingenious than true, for although a certain relation may exist between these meteors, and the wind, still it is so slight that it cannot justly be reduced to the form in which it is thus presented; for were such the case, the gales within the tropics would be incessant, whereas it is well known that there is no part of the world which is so little disturbed by these convulsions of nature, as that which is comprised within the limits of the trade winds, in which latitudes there is hardly a single hour passes without one of these meteors being seen, and

therefore their presence cannot be considered as always having an influence upon the weather. If, however, in the higher latitudes an unusual number of them were to be observed, all having their course towards one particular quarter of the heavens, we might then possibly be induced to expect that this direction had some reference to a coming change; but beyond this there is nothing, we believe, to be derived from the observation of these stars which would lead to any practical good.

A night at sea in the tropics, possesses many charms, which only those who have experienced them can know, and amongst those perhaps not the least is the pleasure to be derived from hearing "a yarn," for the "spinning" of which sailors have always borne a character. This faculty with some appears to be a part of their composition, but it is by no means so general as would be supposed, for it seldom occurs that out of a whole ship's company there are more than three or four really good story-tellers. It so happened, however, that the second mate of the "Worcester"

was a first-rate yarn-spinner, and often have we remained on deck during the whole of the middle watch, which is from midnight till four A.M. solely for the purpose of hearing one of his tales, and that too after having been up all the first watch. He had been for many years in the West Indies, where he had collected such an immense number of incidents, all which he had afterwards fashioned into yarns, occasionally enlivening the plain matter of fact by slight additions of his own imagination, and withal telling them in so easy and pleasant a manner, that time flew by unheeded, and we often found that the best part of the night was gone before we thought of retiring to bed. Finding, however, that this system of not going to sleep before three or four o'clock in the morning, was not the sort of plan by which we should in any way improve our health, we devised another scheme, by which we not only had a good night's rest, but also heard the yarns as before; this was, that we were called at twelve o'clock, by the same person that called the second mate, and having

had three hours sleep previously, were so much the better able to attend to him.

Nothing could be more beautiful than this portion of the voyage. Day followed day, and still the sky was as cloudless, the sun as bright, and the sea as blue, as on the preceding one. The steady breeze was, however, rapidly hurrying us over this delightful region, and after enjoying it for about seven or eight days, the strength of the trade gradually decreased, and after dying away for twenty-four hours, until it was reduced to a mere breath, it finally ceased entirely, and we found ourselves come to a complete stand still. So entire was the absence of wind, that there was not sufficient to fill even the lightest sails, which flapped against the masts with every motion of the ship, whilst the heavy topsails hung idly from their yards, except when a deeper plunge than usual suddenly filled them with the current of air which the motion produced.

This was the first calm which we had seen, and although we had hitherto imagined that it must be

very beautiful, still; now that we had it really before our eyes, we were fain to admit that the sailors were right when they said that a gale was better than a calm. It is a spirit-stirring sight to behold the ocean in its wrath, and our feelings share in the wildness of the waves; but the surface of the water as smooth and unruffled as a sheet of glass loses all its beauty; there are none of the little billows, with their crests of white foam, contrasting with the dark blue of the water itself; and the sluggish mass which now lays before us, wants the liveliness which it presents when a breeze is ruffling its surface. Then again the bright sky is generally covered with a misty film, which, being reflected, imparts to the water a leaden cast, and the splendid colour of the dark blue is lost in a muddy appearance.

Being very much disappointed in the reality of a calm, we were tired of it in a very few hours, although for a while the novelty had pleased us. Sunset was looked forward to, in the hopes that a breeze might spring up again at that time, (which

it often does,) but in vain, not the slightest indication of wind was visible; and, when night came on, the stars were to be seen down to the very horizon itself, which never occurs but in a calm; a heavy dew, moreover, began to fall, which put an end to our hopes for that night at any rate.

A curious circumstance occurred, a day or two afterwards, with reference to stars being visible so low in a calm. We were in company with five other ships, which were also waiting for the breeze, and in such situations vessels are often brought much closer together by little flaws of wind, without having apparently been moving. It was, therefore, necessary to keep a good look out during the night, that these other ships did not come too near. At about ten o'clock, the officer of the watch reported a light on the starboard bow, and the captain accordingly went on deck to look for the vessel. There was the light plainly visible, but, upon watching it for a short time, it turned out to be the planet Jupiter, which was just rising out of the water, but so large, and apparently so

close, as fully to warrant the conclusion that it was a vessel's light, especially as one was known to be in that direction. But the most absurd part of the affair was, that believing it to belong to one of the ships, the supposed signal was answered by a lantern being hoisted at our peak; this was for ever after a joke against the officer who answered Jupiter's signal.

We now come down to the Line, which was till lately so formidable to those who never crossed it before; but the old ceremony, which was then practised, is now entirely done away with, and no vestige of it remains, except that it is usual for passengers who are crossing it for the first time, to subscribe five or ten shillings each for the crew. So many quarrels and serious accidents were the consequence of this absurd practice, that it was agreed amongst all respectable ship-masters to put a stop to it and it is now only talked of as an old custom; but, if any should be curious to know in what manner the ceremony was conducted, we cannot do better than refer them to the second

volume of *Hone's Every Day Book*: where, under the date November 12th, it will be found most fully related by Capt. Edward Hall, who describes it as it was some thirty years ago, when it was in its full vigour. There are many who object to the abolition of any long-established custom of this sort, on the ground that those who were the chief participators in the fun, have so few occasions upon which they can indulge in any amusement, and that the lot of the lower classes is sufficiently hard without its being made still more so by curtailing what few pleasures they now have. With this every one must agree to a certain extent, and every well-disposed person would, no doubt, wish rather to place more amusements within the reach of the lower orders than to diminish them, but they must be of an innocent nature, and not mere cloaks for the commission of outrages, as this absurd custom too often was; and although the device, if kept within moderate bounds, might have been productive of much harmless mirth, still the length to which it was carried rendered it abso-

lutely necessary that it should be done away with, and the crossing the Line is now only a subject for jokes of a less practical description.

CHAPTER III.

ASCENSION.—FIRST APPEARANCE OF LAND.—TURTLE.—GOVERNMENT OF ASCENSION.—WANT OF WATER.—THE TOWN AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.—ABSENCE OF VEGETATION.—OPTHALMIA.—FISHING.—TURTLES' EGGS.—EXCURSIONS AT NIGHT.—PIC-NIC TO THE GREEN MOUNTAIN.—DAMPIER'S SPRINGS.—VIEW FROM THE TOP.—ITER AD ASTRA.—UP IN THE CLOUDS.—PIRATE'S CAVE.—IMPORTANT EVENT.—GANNET FAIR.—BOAT RACE.—BALL ON BOARD.—POLKA UNDER DIFFICULTIES.—ROLLERS.—GEOGRAPHY.

Adrian. Though this island seem to be desert,—
Gonzalo. Here is every thing advantageous to life.
Antonio. True; save means to live.
Sebastian. Of that there's none, or little.

Tempest, Act II. Scene 1.

ALTHOUGH the distance to Ascension from that point at which we crossed the Equator is only 700 miles, it nevertheless took us nearly a fortnight to reach it, owing to the trade wind, which, in the Southern Hemisphere, blows from the southward,

and consequently prevented our steering directly for our port; we were, therefore, obliged to perform a circuitous route of double the distance, stretching away to the eastward for some days, until the bearing of the island was sufficiently altered, to enable us to be certain of reaching it, or in other words, until we had altered our position with respect to the island so much, that the wind, instead of being against us, was now favourable; we then tacked to the westward, and on the morning of the fourth day, had the satisfaction of being informed that land was in sight. Being anxious to know the appearance of land when first seen, we went on deck, and were shown what we should have pronounced to be only a cloud; so much, indeed, did it resemble one, that we fancied we could see many others, which looked fully as much, if not more, like land than the one in question; but then what did an ignorant landsman know about it, we were told that it *was* land, and may therefore say that the first appearance of it is very like a cloud. When, however, we came on deck again

after breakfast, we found that the practised eye of the seaman had not been deceived, and even to our imperfect vision there could be now no doubt; for the morning mist had cleared away, and the land stood out well defined against the blue sky beyond it. Upon drawing nearer, our attention was first arrested by the general barrenness, for even with our glasses we could not discover the slightest symptom of any vegetation whatever, and nothing presented itself at the eastern extremity of the island worth noticing, except a rock which appeared to be one mass of birds, and is therefore named the Boatswain Bird Rock, owing to the number of them found upon it.

From what we had heard of Ascension, and our preconceived ideas of it, associating its name with turtle, we expected to have seen a number of these fish coming up to blow in all directions, and were therefore disappointed in not seeing any, until we got close to the anchorage, where we discovered one immense fellow laying asleep on the top of the water. The fishing for turtle is conducted here

on a regular system, and is in the hands of the government of the island. A boat goes out every evening and returns in the morning, bringing from two to six, weighing on an average about 3½ cwt. each; these are preserved in a large tank, and given out to the people on the island once a week. Producing nothing of itself, Ascension is obliged to be supplied with provisions from England, and for that purpose vessels are annually sent out, with a fresh stock of salt meat, biscuit, and all the usual stores allowed to a vessel in the navy. (This was the purpose of our going there.)

Ascension does not come under the head of colonial possessions, and has no governor or officials belonging to the civil power. It is held by the Admiralty as a depôt for stores for the African station, as being more easily reached than St. Helena, on account of the S. E. trade. It is however treated as nothing more than a ship, and in fact is looked upon as if it were "The Ascension" store ship, moored in the South Atlantic. An old vessel, called the "Tortoise,"

is constantly laying there, and every person on on the island is entered on her books, and supposed to belong to the crew. The commander of the ship is the governor of the island, unless it should happen that another vessel, commanded by an officer who is senior to him, should arrive, in which case the new comer supersedes him, as long as he remains there, but on his departure the captain of the Tortoise again assumes the reins of this important government. Every thing is under the immediate superintendance of the governor himself, and the strictest discipline is preserved, in even the most trifling things. There are more regulations to be attended to here with regard to the hours of landing, and walking about, than are observed in the strictest of continental towns, in shutting of gates, or demanding pass-ports.

The most curious sight is seeing every one coming to the tank, the first thing in the morning, for their allowance of water, which is served out to them at the rate of a gallon per day for each

person, with the most scrupulous exactness, by an old sergeant of marines. This seems extraordinary, that people living on shore should be limited to so small a quantity of water, which is supposed to be an evil only found at sea, but here it is absolutely necessary, as in a ship, for there being no spring on the whole island, they are entirely dependant on the dew for their supply of water. Rain does not fall here for as much as a twelvemonth together, and they have been known to be even so long as three years without, so that little or no assistance is to be derived therefrom, but if a shower does come by any accident, it is considered one of the greatest blessings that could befal them, and all possible means are used to avail themselves of it to the greatest advantage. As these blessings are however like angels' visits, few and far between, they can hardly be taken into consideration as a source of water to the island; they are, therefore, wholly dependant upon the dew, which falls very heavily upon the highest point called the Green Mountain, where numerous small tanks and other

receptacles are placed, at every point where the least dripping is perceptible: the water thus collected is sufficient for the wants of the inhabitants who live there at present, and is conveyed to the town by means of pipes, down the hill to the tanks, in which it is carefully preserved under lock and key. There are, however, certain times of the year when the fall of dew is so slight that the people are obliged to be put upon a smaller allowance, and they have occasionally had to send to St. Helena for a supply, but during the time that we were there, and indeed generally, there is sufficient for all necessary purposes. Washing is done, as may be naturally supposed, at a very extravagant price, and persons are, in many cases, requested to send their own water, unless, indeed, they choose to have their clothes washed in the sea, which is very little better than no washing at all. With so small a quantity of water as that allowed them, viz., a gallon per day, it requires a week, at least, to be able to collect sufficient to do it at all, and even the best washing will not bear a very close examination.

The town, (if, indeed, we may call by so grand a name an assemblage of about a dozen houses,) is close to the landing place, but is not visible from the shipping, on account of its lying in a hollow. It consists of a square, of which three sides are made up of cottages and workshops, whilst the fourth is formed by a row of government store-houses. The more respectable part of the community, such as the master, surgeon, and captain of marines, have their houses situated upon a little rising ground, which gives them a view of the sea, and the benefit of the breeze, the want of which is much felt in the hollow, where it is oppressively hot. The Commander or Governor lives about a mile up the hill, from whence he overlooks the shipping, and can see what is going on, either on board the vessels, or on shore.

No one here has any business of their own, as they all belong to the Navy, although residing on shore; thus the master of the Tortoise lives in a very nice house, and superintends the spar and boat department; the surgeon has his hospital, and

his private residence, but is nevertheless, surgeon of the Tortoise; the lieutenants remain on board the ship, with a part of the men, and the rest are employed as required in different places.

When we say that no one has any business of his own, we must, however, except one Mr. Webb, who keeps the only shop in the place and sells every description of article that is likely to be required: his greatest sale, however, consists of beer and porter, which we can testify from experience are particularly good, and very moderate in price, considering the out of the way position of the island. The demand for these articles must be pretty considerable, if we may judge from the number of broken bottles which we see strewed about in all directions, from the first moment of landing, up to the very summit of the Green Mountain.

The perfect barrenness of the island cannot be conceived from the view of it from the shipping, although, even then, it appears nothing but a mass of rock, and it is not until after landing and

walking about, that the stranger perceives to its full extent, the entire absence of all symptoms of vegetation, or even soil which could be rendered productive by cultivation. The whole appears to be one mass of cinders, which crumble under the feet, and during the hottest part of the day become so heated by the sun, that they seem to be not yet quite gone out. The glare reflected from this hot ground is excessively painful, and the heat thus added to that of the sun, which of itself is intense, renders it almost impossible to move out during the middle of the day, and for two hours at that time there is a general cessation of all work.

It cannot fail to strike any stranger upon his first arrival here, that every person he meets has a most extraordinary appearance about the eyes. The reason of this will, however, manifest itself to him in the course of the day, without giving him the trouble of asking for information, for after a few hours spent on shore, he will find that his own eyes feel remarkably sore; this is owing to the minute particles of the hot dust which in many

cases, as, indeed, it did with ourselves, will cause so much inflammation that the use of one, if not both, is prevented for two or three days; this is, however, only the effect upon new comers, but those that from living there for a length of time have become accustomed to it, do not feel any actual pain, but only acquire a bleariedness, which, until the cause is known, appears the more extraordinary, from its universal prevalence.

There is little to be done in the way of amusement, except fishing, which is rendered more amusing from the variety of species found in the same spot, consequently exciting some degree of curiosity, to know what next strange "monster of the deep" will be caught: we made an attempt to preserve two or three, which, when first taken exhibited most beautiful colours, but did not succeed; for there was nothing in the form of the fish which was so peculiar as to render them worth keeping when the various hues were gone, which we found was always the case in the course of a very few hours. There were, however, two or

three sorts which were very excellent eating, the best of which was the Cavalho, one of which we generally contrived to catch every morning, for breakfast: another was a little long thin fish, not unlike a very small pike in its shape, but much longer, with the same shaped head, and as well stocked with teeth, which, though not sufficiently large to do us any harm, must, no doubt, have been a source of great terror to the smaller fish. These used to swim in great numbers close under the stern of the vessel, and afforded us excellent sport in the evening, when we came up to smoke our cigars at sun-set, and having just light enough to be able to see them, sat upon the taffrail, with about half-a-dozen yards of twine, and a crooked pin; the bait was a small piece of pork about the size of a pea, and with this rude fishing tackle we amused ourselves as long as we could see, and often caught enough to make a very nice little dish for supper. Turtle, with which we expected to have been surfeited, we saw only once a week, on Sunday, and then certainly had enough of it, for

owing to the heat it is impossible to keep it, and we were therefore obliged to have it all used up at once; there were turtle stakes for breakfast, turtle stakes for lunch, and turtle stakes for dinner, with the addition, however, of turtle soup, at the latter meal. As far as our humble opinion goes, and of course with all due deference to the superior tastes of aldermen, we certainly prefer mock-turtle soup, to the genuine article; but we must say, that we think the stakes are far before any other dish that comes to table. During our stay, we had also an opportunity of tasting the turtle's eggs, but they, having been obtained by means, which, according to the laws of the island, would have subjected the persons taking them, to a very heavy fine, no doubt tasted much better than we should otherwise have thought them, upon the same principle that stolen fruit is always the sweetest; the manner in which we came by them was purely accidental. One of our party in walking along the beach, saw something white which attracted his notice, and, stopping to pick it up,

he found it was the top of an egg protruding through the sand; carefully extracting it, he came running after us, to show what he had found, and, not knowing what egg it was, but merely preserving it for its peculiarity, was about to get into the boat again, to go off to the ship, when one of the men informed him that it was a turtle's, and that where that came from there were sure to be plenty more: going back to the spot, and taking one of the men with him, he began clearing away the sand round about the place from whence he had taken the first, and presently came down to a nest of some score of eggs, which they took out, and then filled the sand in again; having by this feat destroyed nearly a hundred turtle. It is, however, but justice to them to say, that they were at that time, ignorant of the extent of the crime they were committing, and merely looked upon the discovery, as any one who has been six weeks in a ship, would look upon a basket of fresh eggs. They were accordingly carried off in triumph, and brought on board, where we immediately set to

work to blow one or two, to keep as curiosities; this, however, was not so easy a job as we anticipated, for the white is so glutinous, and of such a consistency, that it requires a large aperture to be made, in order to get it out. Instead of being, oval, like the generality of eggs, these are perfectly round, and white; the size is about an inch and a half diameter; but the most peculiar part is the shell, which is not brittle, but can be indented by the pressure of the finger, and is not very much unlike parchment in substance. After the egg is blown, this shell or skin, when dry, becomes brittle, but can be made soft, and tough again by soaking in water.

There were amongst our number, some who were so fond of fishing, that they used to go out by moonlight, which is the only time to have any thing like good sport; and for this purpose one of the cutters was employed every evening at sun-set, the party taking with them such of the crew as were known to be good fishermen, to pull the boat. They then went to one of the small bays,

and, having run into moderately deep water, let go a small anchor, and commenced operations. The first evening was the most successful, owing probably to the expedition being under the direction of the commander of H. M. brig Star, which was laying in the roads, who piloted the boat into the position, which, from having been engaged in such nocturnal excursions before, he knew to be the best. On this occasion they returned with a perfect boat load, of all sizes and descriptions, not even excepting sharks and snakes.

A few days after our arrival, a party was made up amongst ourselves, the officers of the Tortoise, and some of the residents on shore, for a pic-nic to the top of the Green Mountain. In order to be able to enjoy the day, we were informed that it was absolutely necessary that we should arrive at the top to breakfast, so that we should not have any walking in the sun. Carrying the provisions, although essential to the poetry of a pic-nic, is nevertheless not adapted to such excursions within the tropics; ours were, therefore, sent up in a cart

on the previous day, so that nothing was left for us but to convey ourselves up. There being ladies amongst the party, donkeys were ordered to be in readiness by four o'clock in the morning, for the distance being seven miles up a mountain, it was calculated that, what with delay of landing, collecting the party, and fairly starting, we should not reach there before seven, by which time the sun would have acquired great power. At half-past four we got into our boat, having first had a cup of coffee and a biscuit, by way of support till breakfast, and soon after five we were all mustered and started on our pilgrimage. There was little to vary the monotony of the cinder-heap, for some way, and for the first three miles we appeared to have made but little progress, for as we approached the foot of the hill, the distance to the top appeared longer. Three miles of steady tramp over crunching cinders, with not one single article of any description to look at, is not the species of enjoyment which makes one heedless of the calls of hunger and thirst; it was, therefore, with some

pleasure that we saw at the distance of half a mile ahead a tank; which is the only place on the lower part of the island where water is left open for those who pass by; this, however can hardly be called an indulgence, but is rather an absolute necessity, for the thirst consequent upon a seven mile walk in the heat of the sun, over ground which was not blessed with one particle of shade, would be more than any one ought to be compelled to bear, for this reason this tank is left open, and has not unappropriately been named the God-be-thanked-Tank. Here we were refreshed with a draught of water, out of a glass which we found had been left there for us, by the man who carried our provisions up the day before, (having been directed so to do by the manager of our party,) and once more set forth. But now the worst part of the work was to come, for the ascent was more perpendicular and the sun just beginning to feel warm. Once or twice, indeed, we began to grumble, and say that the top must be a paradise itself, to be worth the trouble of coming up to it. At

the distance of about a mile and a half from the top, and a little to the left of the road, are Dampier's Springs, which, when first found, were supposed to be really springs, although it has since been proved that they are only drippings, the same as at the other places; but be they what they may, a large quantity of water is obtained from them, and therefore so long as they do not dry up, it can matter little whether the source is a spring, or merely the draining. Leaving these on the left, we soon began to approach an evidently different region, for here and there a green bush or two could be seen, and at last our road passed between a double row of plantain trees; these being the first indication of any thing like vegetation, that we had seen, appeared greener, and fresher, than they perhaps actually were, but nothing could have prepared us for the view that met the eye on turning the last corner. The dusty reddish brown of the ground, which was all we had hitherto been looking at, was now exchanged for a *coup d'œil*, which, in any other situation, would

have been thought worthy of some remark, but placed as it was, like an oasis in the desert, its beauty was rendered the more striking. The road now led by a ravine, the steep sides of which were studded with bushes, leaving the black rock visible between, and trees too had here found root, growing apparently out of the solid rock. On our left was a bank covered with grass, on the ridge of which was a row of shrubs, and occasionally a few flowers. A few minutes more brought us to the house, and the fact that we were at our journey's end, was one which afforded us no small satisfaction. Breakfast was immediately prepared, and that being over, we set out to see what was to be seen. The house itself is a very decent looking little cottage, and answers the purpose for which it was built excessively well, which was for the residence of the officers of the garrison, which was stationed there during the time that Napoleon was at St. Helena, when a force was kept at Ascension, to be in readiness, in case of any attempt being made by the friends of the ex-Emperor to possess

themselves of it, as it would have been a situation extremely favourable to any co-operation with the illustrious exile. There is however, nothing particular in the building itself, but the situation is beautiful in the extreme, and amply repays the trouble of the ascent, for no one could possibly form the slightest conception of so pretty a spot existing, by the appearance from below. Shrubs, trees, and flowers, all arranged with taste, and much in the manner of an English garden, with long walks winding along the brow of the hill for some distance, and the whole so thickly planted, as to shut out from the view the dreary-looking waste below, with its plain covered with gigantic cinder-heaps, which, looking down upon them, as we did, from an elevation of nearly three thousand feet, appeared precisely as if this island were the dust-hole of the world, and that every nation had some particular part of the plain upon which they were allowed to shoot their cinders. From this height, too, we looked down into the craters of the larger hills, which, in many instances, are very

perfect, and one in particular has a complete ring in the centre, which, from its resemblance to a circus, has been called the Devil's Riding School. We now started off to make a circuit of the hill, by means of a narrow path about two feet wide, which has been made round it by the soldiers whilst stationed there. In order to save time, and shorten the distance, a tunnel has been cut through the hill, which leads at once to the back part of the island; over the entrance to this tunnel there is carved in the stone, "*Sic itur ad astra*," but, after the few first yards, the passage becomes so dark, that it would seem more appropriate to call it the "*Facilis descensus Averni*." Emerging at the other end, we came to the spot where the principal supply of water is obtained, which at that time was abundant, owing to the heaviness of the mists, which came rolling over the top of the mountain every now and then, enveloping us in a cloud, of such density that for the few moments during which it was passing, we could not see ten yards before us. The temperature of these

clouds was considerably lower than that of the atmosphere, and the coolness imparted by them delightfully refreshing. It is, however, easy to be conceived, that the sudden check to perspiration, which is given by these cold vapours, must be excessively injurious, and consequently the residents here are obliged to be particularly careful of exposure to their influence, especially during the night.

The path round the mountain has been made at about the point where the vegetation ceases, so that we have upon the one hand, bushes, flowers, and a green field; and upon the other a perfect waste. The view to be obtained from any part of the back of the island, is so inferior to those on the other side, that it hardly repays the trouble of a two mile walk along a narrow path, where a false step would in many places occasion a fall of between two and three hundred feet, and renders what is intended for pleasure, a source of considerable uneasiness, and to a head not naturally strong, of danger; so much so indeed, that one of the

ladies of our party was unable to go the entire round, and was obliged to go over the top of the hill to the other side, as her head became so giddy that she could not return by the way we had come. After all, there is nothing whatever to be seen which is worth going two miles for, and the only incident worth recording in the tour, is that, about half way, we discovered a large blackberry bush; banishing at once all thoughts of Ascension and the tropics, and thinking only of the hedges of England, "in the merry days when we were young," we plunged at once into the middle of the bush, and brought off the largest and most thickly berried branch we could find. This part having been passed, we were not at all sorry when we once more arrived at the garden belonging to the house, where we sat down upon the grass, and determined to spend the rest of the day in basking in the prettiest part, instead of tiring ourselves with exploring the uninteresting. At the extreme end of the garden, are some caves, connected with which is some romantic story about

pirates, but what it was we did not exactly learn; the caves themselves are, however, nothing very peculiar, and bear a much greater resemblance to places adapted for garden seats, than the resort of pirates; and the only history connected with them we should imagine to be related in the numerous inscriptions on the walls, which inform us that Peter Snooks and Thomas Jones visited this place on a certain day. This little national failing of ours seems to have extended itself wherever English research has penetrated, and the name of John Smith is to be seen inscribed in large letters in all the conspicuous parts of the world, from a post in our own country, to the top of the Pyramids, or the base of Pompey's Pillar.

Our attention was now turned to a more important object, and one which is the very life and soul of every pic-nic, namely, the dinner, which, if got through in the regular way, would lose half its charm; there should always be some little difficulty, or the want of some necessary article, to enhance its pleasure; this we found in

the want of wine glasses, which obliged us to have recourse to the disagreeable expedient of drinking champagne out of tumblers: this, in itself, was not so bad, but when other wines and beer, had all to be imbibed by the same means, the mixture was somewhat strange. Towards seven o'clock, we once more formed in marching order, and prepared to descend; this was a much more easy task than the ascending had been, and the sun being now almost down, the air was delightfully cool. Nothing could have been more happily arranged, for as the sun set, the moon rose, and being full, gave us as much light as was necessary, without the heat attending the presence of the sun. Thus ended our pic-nic, which we all were fain to admit had afforded us more pleasure than we imagined was to be found in so desolate and barren a place, as it appeared at first.

Our next excursion was to what they call the Gannet Fair, which is a most extraordinary collection of birds, called Gannets, which are either so stupid, or else unacquainted with the nature and

habits of man, from the slight intercourse they have had with them, that they allow persons to walk close up to them without offering to move, and any quantity may be taken alive, by merely picking them off the nests; the down upon their breasts is pure white, finer than swandown, and very thick; we collected a large number, and carried them home by stringing them in bunches by the neck with our handkerchiefs; the operation of skinning all which, served to employ our friend the Burra Tindal (who we have before said was clever at every thing) for the whole of the next two days, by which time we had procured another lot. These skins were then cured, and kept by the captain's wife, to be made up in England. There is also another fair, held by a different description of bird, called Wide-awakes, which we did not attend, as the season was over.

We must certainly say, that the fortnight, during which we remained at Ascension, was passed with less ennui than would be supposed to be inevitably felt in a place of this dreary descrip-

tion, for which we were greatly indebted to Capt. D——, of the Star, who, when all other expedients failed, got up a boat race between two whale boats, one belonging to himself, and the other to his officers; for it being to every one's interest to capture as many prizes as possible, it is customary for the officers of the different vessels upon the African station, to buy any boat which may chance to be particularly fast, thus being enabled in many cases to take a prize, which they would be unable to catch with the more heavily constructed boats, with which they are provided by the Admiralty. The two in question, belonging to the Star, were beautiful looking whale boats, perfect clippers, and as nearly alike in size and build as possible; each was manned with a fine crew, and all bid fair for a hardly disputed race, which indeed it proved, for the winner had but a few feet the advantage at the end of a mile and a half.

It was now our turn to do something for the amusement of those who had hitherto so kindly contributed to ours, and accordingly our skipper

determined to give a dinner party, with a ball afterwards. The first part of the entertainment passed off very well, and no dinner could have gone on better; but when the second act commenced, a difficulty appeared which had not before suggested itself to our minds, which was the fact, that the ship was rolling; the motion being, however, so slight as not to have in any way interfered with the dinner, could not be any obstacle to the due performance of a quadrille, which was gone through with all due forms and ceremonies, but the case was found to be very different when a polka was attempted, and still worse with a waltz, which two last were finally obliged to be given up.

With regard to the rolling of the ship, the motion is not owing to any increase in the wind, but to what are termed rollers, which consist of a succession of large waves, which rise to a great height, and are very dangerous to shipping by breaking over the decks; on one occasion they acquired such force as to wash away the pier, which had been built with great trouble and care,

at which time there was no apparent cause for their appearance, as the weather was the usual weather of the trades, and the wind moderate. St. Helena also received considerable damage on this occasion, but these were of a strength never known before or since; they are, however, very common, and indeed an alteration in the swell is perceptible almost every day, at certain states of the tide. A flag is kept at the pier head, which is hoisted whenever the "rollers are in," and no person is then allowed to land; it is sometimes only hoisted half way up, which intimates that persons may land, but that cargo cannot be received. At such times the operation of stepping ashore is one of some difficulty, and some skill is required in bringing the boat alongside the pier, for the swell at one moment lifts it up to the fifth or sixth step, and at the next draws it down far below them all; it is therefore necessary to watch the chance, and spring ashore at the moment that the boat is at its highest point; in order to assist this, a rope is suspended over head, by means of which it is easy

to swing off; but should the foot slip, the consequence might be serious, as the return wave would rise with such force, as probably to dash the person's head against the rock, before he had time to prepare to save himself. To new comers, who are not accustomed to the place, there is also another source of fear, which is that the boat itself will be damaged, by striking against the rock, but of this there is no danger, as the rush of water being impeded, causes an eddy, which of itself will prevent any accident of this sort.

Thus much for our own knowledge of the place, but before we quit the subject, it would perhaps not be amiss to give some short description of its geographical position, &c.

It was first discovered in the year 1501, by João de Nova Galego, a Portuguese navigator. It derived its name, according to some accounts, from the fact of its having been first seen on Ascension day; but others ascribe it to the supposition that it was at one time under water, but that the convulsions of its volcanic nature raised it above the

level. How far this may apply to the lower part of the island we can not say, but it seems excessively improbable, and even impossible, that a mass could be thrown up to such a height as the Green Mountain, so that the former derivation appears the most feasible. The island is about seven miles and a half in length, by six in breadth, and is distant from St. Helena, 680 miles. It is situated in latitude 7° 56′ south, and 14° 14′ west, but with regard to the longitude there are many opinions; it is generally placed in charts ten miles farther west, and indeed almost all accounts give its position 14° 24′ and 14° 28′, but our observations, as well as those of the resident master, who has determined the fact by the mean of fourteen chronometers, are in favour of the more easterly position, which accounts for our having seen it as we did two hours before we expected to have done so.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. HELENA. — FIRST APPEARANCE. — JAMES TOWN. — LADDER HILL. — DEFENCES. — DIANA'S PEAK. — CLIMATE. — NAPOLEON'S GRAVE. — LONGWOOD. — FIRST DISCOVERY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE — AND PASSAGE TO INDIA. — WESTERLY GALE. — TABLE MOUNTAIN. — LION'S HEAD. — THE TABLE CLOTH. — TOWN AND HOTELS. — CONSTANTIA. — FISHING. — DIFFERENT CURRENTS OF WIND IN THE BAY.

> When Victory's Gallic column shall but rise,
> Like Pompey's Pillar, in a desert skies,
> The rocky isle that holds or held his dust
> Shall crown th' Atlantic like the hero's bust,
> And mighty nature o'er his obsequies,
> Do more than niggard envy still denies.
>
> *Byron.*

ST. HELENA, which although a small island, has borne so prominent a part in the history of the world, from its having been the spot where the most eventful of human careers was terminated, is situated in 15° 55′ south latitude, and 5° 55′ west longitude. It was first discovered by João

de Nova Galego, (the same man who had previously discovered Ascension,) on his return from India, and derives its name from having been seen on St. Helen's day. When seen from a distance, it appears nothing more than a mere mass of rugged rock; but, upon a nearer approach, the summits of the hills in the interior appear clothed with verdure, which, however, are again shut out from view, when still closer, by the stupendous cliffs which overhang the sea. Its first appearance is far from promising, and almost as desolate as its neighbour, Ascension, for its exterior presents little to the view beyond a mass of rocks, formed of different sorts of lava, which rise in perpendicular precipices from 300 to 1000 feet in height. This chain of natural defence is here and there broken by deep ravines, which run down to the sea, but the *toute ensemble* of its exterior, when viewed from the eastward, is as wild as can be imagined.

After passing Barn Point, it is usual to take in all the lighter sails, as the wind comes down the

valleys in such violent gusts, that were a ship unprepared, serious damage might be the consequence; for at one moment there is hardly sufficient breeze to carry the ship on, and at the next she is laid over upon her beam ends by a sudden puff. The shipping presently begins to appear, one by one, and, after passing Munden Point, the town is opened to the view: immediately opposite to it, is the anchorage; which, from the wind being always off the land, is favourable for sailing, as there are no dangers to be avoided, and no narrow passage to be gone through, at first leaving, as is the case with the generality of harbours; for the anchoring ground is only a small bank, and the moment the anchor is out of it, the vessel can shoot straight out to sea, and be as safe as if she were out of sight of all land, in the middle of the Atlantic.

James Town, which is the only one St. Helena possesses, is situated in the bottom of one of the deepest ravines, being flanked on either side by two immense precipices; the one to the eastward,

or left side, as looking at it from the shipping, is Rupert's Hill; and the other to the westward, or right hand, is called Ladder Hill, from an immense flight of steps, which reach from the bottom to the top, ascending which is considered a feat by all strangers, as, indeed, it really is. At the top of Ladder Hill is a small fort, which commands an extensive view, and forms part of the fortification of the island; which, during the time that it belonged to the East India Company, were very strong, and rendered it almost as impregnable as Gibraltar, which, indeed, it somewhat resembles in its mode of defence; for here too the rocks were converted into batteries, and an enemy approaching those perpendicular cliffs, which, being so well defended by nature, appear to want no assistance from art, would be surprised to find that every hole and corner contained a gun. In addition to this, and all the other more ostensible defences of any fortified town, there were also a number of guns which were slung in chains, instead of being placed upon carriages, the object of which was,

that they could be depressed to any point, so that should a vessel by any accident have worked her way so close in shore as to be sheltered from the fire of the fixed guns, which might possibly be, as the water is sufficiently deep to allow them almost to touch the rocks themselves, in which case they would be out of the reach of the batteries; they would then find, to their consternation, that they were completely at the mercy of the slung guns, which pointed right down upon their decks, and one shot from which would cause more havoc than a dozen of the others, if, indeed, it was not sufficient to sink them at once, which would be the case with any small vessel. These numerous strong defences are considered superfluous by the engineers of the Queen, to whom the island now more directly belongs; and are, consequently, done away with in a great measure; for, as they very properly argue, what is the use of keeping up such an expensive establishment as would be necessary to preserve all these guns, and fortifications, in a proper and efficient state, when nature has

provided such natural defences, as hardly any other place in the world possesses. Suppose an enemy to come and endeavour to take possession of the island; in order to do so they must land, and in order to do that must choose one of the points where the ravines run down to the sea, and form natural landing places; they then find themselves in a hollow, with steep rocks on three sides, and the sea behind them. In such a position it is evident that they would be cut to pieces by a third part of their number from above, or be forced to retreat.

To return, however, to the appearance of James Town from the anchorage; it lies in a valley, which forms a triangle, being about a fifth part of a mile broad at the base, which is the distance between Rupert's and Ladder Hill, and, perhaps, three quarters of a mile long; at the back of the town rises a fine green slope, called High Knoll, on the south side of which is Plantation House, the residence of the governor, a tolerably handsome and well-built edifice. The houses are generally neat

in their outward appearance, but mostly deficient in their accommodation, and the arrangement of the interior. The Church, which is by the entrance to the town, is not an inelegant building, but still has nothing particularly striking about it. A little to the right is the Observatory, or at least, what is called the Time Office, at which a ball is dropped every day at one o'clock, for the vessels to regulate their chronometers by, but the Observatory itself is at the top of the hill. The great astronomer, Halley, visited St. Helena in the year 1676, in order to be able to make some observations of the stars in the southern hemisphere, which were essential to the designs he had in view; there he made several important discoveries, and returned to England in 1678.

The first occupiers of the island were Portuguese, who came here from Goa, in 1513, bringing with them some animals, such as pigs and goats, for their sustenance; they also let loose a number of wild fowl, and planted vegetables of different kinds. In addition to these necessaries, they had

also some luxuries, such as figs and oranges, all which prospered, for the climate of St. Helena seems particularly adapted for the cultivation of a great variety, as so many different temperatures are found, which suit the productions of a colder country, as well as those of the tropical regions. After the Portuguese had acquired a number of ports on the Eastern side of Africa, these original settlers abandoned the island to the Dutch, who next had possession of it, until the year 1600, when they were expelled by the English. A few years afterwards the Dutch re-took it from us by surprise; but being recovered by Captain Munden, it again fell into the hands of the English, who have since kept possession, and rendered it so impregnable that there is little chance of its changing masters any more, especially as it is so valuable to us, as being in the direct line of our homeward-bound East Indiamen, and a most convenient point for obtaining a fresh supply of water, which is here good and abundant. There are three months in the year when no commander would

touch at the Cape of Good Hope, if it could possibly be avoided, on account of the bad weather, which renders it a matter of considerable danger and difficulty to get in and out. This is avoided by running past the Cape as quickly as possible, and watering at St. Helena instead, which, although 1700 miles distant, is reached in eight or nine days, with the assistance of a strong S. E. trade. This, added to the fact of there being a scanty supply of water at Ascension, renders St. Helena of the utmost importance to us, more so than any other nation in the world, inasmuch as the number of our trading vessels, is more than that of all the rest together.

Most English articles are to be obtained here, although at a high price, as indeed is every thing on the island; for instance, a cabbage will often fetch as much as half-a-crown, and a sack of potatoes, even at moderate times, will be worth guinea. The mutton is good, but small, and partridges and pheasants are occasionally met with; black-berries were introduced as a curiosity,

but have luxuriated wonderfully, and are now abundant. This island, as well as Ascension, appears to have had a volcanic origin, for it is composed of lava in various states, it is however much larger, for it is ten miles and a half long, six and three quarters in breadth, and about twenty-eight in circumference. Although the Green Mountain, in Ascension, is 2818 feet above the level of the water, and Diana's Peak, the highest point here, only 2697, still the general height of St. Helena is considerably the greatest, as the rocks on the coast itself are in many places 1500 feet high, whereas Ascension runs down quite low at the sea. Thunder and lightning are almost unknown at St. Helena, which is probably owing to the constant prevalence of the trade wind, which keeps the air in a certain state, and prevents the accumulation of the electric fluid. Dr. O'Meara suggests that it may possibly be owing to the height of Diana's Peak, which attracts the fluid, and conducts it quietly into the sea. But, were this so, the same cause should

prevent lightning in the number of islands in the eastern seas, where there are higher mountains, and yet lightning is seen every night throughout the year. It does not, however, seem unlikely, that the incessant change which is going on in the atmosphere, at a place situated as this is, in the very strength of a constant breeze, should keep it free from too great a quantity of electricity, and at the same time prevent the rarefaction of the air, which is the cause of violent storms, which are seldom experienced here. This makes the coincidence more remarkable, that on the day of Napoleon's death, the island was swept with a tremendous storm, which tore up almost all the trees about Longwood (Napoleon's house).

With regard to the climate of St. Helena, of which both Napoleon himself, and his friends, have complained so much, there are many conflicting statements, all equally professing to be founded in fact. His surgeon, O'Meara, says,—"St. Helena, in addition to the general causes of insalubrity to Europeans, which are inseparable from a tropical

climate, has also local and peculiar causes for being particularly unhealthy, as the great mortality amply proves." He then proceeds to give several examples of the large proportion of deaths which have occurred, and endeavours to make it understood that the climate is excessively unhealthy, and that the reputation for salubrity which it enjoyed, was based upon ignorance of facts. To contradict this, there appears a statement, that, out of the fifty attendants about Napoleon's person, only one man died in the course of five years, and that one "had brought the seeds of consumption with him from Europe."

As to the assertion, that Napoleon's death was hastened by the insalubrity of the climate, it is sufficiently contradicted by Dr. Arnott, who plainly denies the truth of such statement, and suggests what is much more probable, that it was the effect of captivity, upon the mind of a man of such unbounded ambition. Allowing these diversities of opinion to counteract one another, there still remains the long-established character for salu-

brity, which it has always had, and for the discontinuance of which there is no apparent cause.

The interest which attaches itself to this island, has lost half its charm, since the removal of the body, and the pilgrimages to Slane's Valley, where Napoleon was buried, have of late years become less frequent; but, before that event occurred, it was customary for every one that set foot on the island, to go to that grave, which, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, was now sufficient for him, for whom the world was once too little. Too much has, however, been said about Napoleon, to allow room for our humble pen; and we will therefore not attempt to add any thing further, but pass to such other subjects, as may appear justly to come under the observation of the more recent traveller.

Longwood we visited of course, and found that so little was the respect shown to the memory of its illustrious occupant, that part of it was filled with hay. Speaking of the unfitness of the house for the reception of a man who had been an emperor, O'Meara says,

"A stronger proof that Longwood is the worst "and most unpleasant part of the island cannot be "afforded, than by the fact of its not having been "inhabited before Napoleon came to the island, "*except by the lieutenant Governor*, as a country "residence for three or four months annually."

Now, from the idea we have of lieutenant Governors generally, we should imagine that they were not the sort of men who would choose the worst and most unpleasant places for their country residences, and that the fact of his living there for three or four months annually, was a pretty conclusive proof that it was not so very bad after all; and as to its unpleasantness, Napoleon himself said, that he should be more contented to fix his residence there, than to remain in the town as a mark for the prying curiosity of importunate spectators.

Thus much for St. Helena, which we left on the evening of the second day, and consequently had not time to explore more fully.

Whilst the old Worcester is finding her way

38316

down to the Cape, it would perhaps not be amiss to give a slight sketch of the first discovery of this circuitous route to India; the merit of which belongs to Vasco de Gama. The Cape itself was first discovered by one Bartholomew Diaz, a Portuguese navigator, who was sent out for that purpose by Pedro, Regent of Portugal, in 1486. Having been driven to the eastward, by a continuance of strong westerly gales, he passed the object of his search without being aware of it, and came in sight of land at the distance of forty leagues farther to the eastward. Coasting back again, he at length, to his great joy, found the most southern point, and having carefully determined its position, returned home well satisfied with his success. On account of the violent storms he had encountered in its vicinity, he gave it the name of Cabo Tormentoso, or the Stormy Cape, but being unwilling to deter seamen by so ominous a name, and auguring great advantages from the discovery, the king afterwards had it altered to the one which it still retains—the Cape of Good Hope.

It was not, however, until ten years after this, that the passage to India was attempted, by Vasco de Gama, who in 1497, went out to Calicut, round the Cape, and through the Mozambique Channel.

As our object is rather to give descriptions of places that we have visited, than seek to swell our pages by the recital of facts derived from other sources, we will refrain from dwelling too long upon such points as are, or may be, already known to the readers; and wherever we think it advantageous, or necessary, to refer to events which are related in history, we shall endeavour to do so as briefly as is compatible with the information we wish to impart. The recapitulation of a few historical facts, which we have just now made, has been introduced, not because it was the means of filling a page, but as a proof of the wonderful progress of navigation and commerce, by showing that so lately as 350 years ago, no vessel had ever gone to India from this part of the world, whereas now there are no less than 20,000 which trade there annually. From the same source of information,

we shall, in a future chapter, show that the passage to India, through Egypt, so far from being only lately attempted, was actually discovered *before* the one round the Cape of Good Hope, and moreover, that the line then pursued, was identical with the present overland route.

Having taken leave of the S. E. trade in about the 25th degree of south latitude, we fell in with the strong westerly breezes which prevail in those parts, during the winter* months of August and September, and our course now being nearly due east, we were enabled to avail ourselves of them to the greatest advantage. The difference between bad weather and a strong breeze, (in a sailor's idea,) consists in the direction of the wind, for that which when adverse is described in the log as a "constant hard gale," becomes a "splendid breeze," when favourable. So wide a distinction can hardly be called unreasonable, if we judge by the effects of the different positions; running as we now

* Summer in the northern hemisphere being winter in the south.

were "before the wind," all was very delightful, the motion was hardly perceptible, but the hissing and boiling of the water, as we cut through it, showed that the pace was tremendous. The ship herself was as steady as a church, but the sea, for some yards on either side, was a perfect sheet of white foam. Some slight idea of the power of the wind can be formed, by considering the immense force which must be requisite to move a mass of 1500 tons through the water, at the rate of 260 miles per day. Placing ourselves in the other position, and supposing our course to have been at less than a right angle to the wind, which is technically termed "close hauled," we should then have experienced the pleasures of a gale at sea, and instead of going smoothly and swiftly on our way, should have been laying upon one side, pitching and tossing about at the mercy of the waves, which would be every minute breaking over us, and, instead of making any progress, have probably found that we were in the same position, if indeed not worse, at the end of three or four days' buffeting.

Two or three days run, with this fine breeze, soon brought us in sight of our next point, and, just at sunset, which is the most favourable time for seeing a great distance, the broad flat top of Table Mountain was discernible in the horizon. According to the calculation of the ship's position at noon, it could not then have been less than forty miles from us, and it has been seen at even a still greater distance. It is more readily distinguished than any other land, although of the same height, would be, owing to its breadth at the top, which renders that part which first appears above the horizon, a considerably larger object than the same number of feet in altitude of the generality of other hills would present, owing to their conical shape.

Running into a harbour at night, is at all times attended with considerable danger, and although it is repeatedly done by many of our shipmasters, especially with small vessels, yet the advantage obtained by the few hours which are thereby saved, cannot generally be sufficient to warrant

their incurring so great a risk, as they must necessarily do; for allowing them to be ever so well acquainted with the various marks and bearings of different objects, the positions of which are a guide to the safe entrance, they must always be liable to the inability of correctly estimating distance, which is consequent upon darkness, and owing to which many hundreds of lives have been lost, through the want of a moderate degree of caution.

Our captain, however, being a more sensible man, very prudently determined to wait quietly until the next morning; he therefore kept on at the same good pace for three hours more, and being then about ten miles from the first point, and near enough to ensure getting in on the following day, even if the wind should die away, determined to go no nearer, without sufficient light to see what he was about. The lighter sails were, therefore, taken in, and the vessel hove to; in which position we remained during the rest of the night, and, like St. Paul, "wished for the day."

In the due course of events, the day again

broke, and with its first appearance, we once more made all sail. The breeze had considerably decreased during the night, and we now ran in quietly, at the rate of about four or five miles an hour, which was the more pleasant, as it gave longer time to examine the various objects that we passed, and which, had we still been sailing with our former speed, we should hardly have seen before they would have been out of sight. After running for some distance along a bold rocky coast, where there is little to attract attention, we turned round a sharp point, and were, at once, in Table Bay. The first effect of the view which burst thus suddenly upon us, was striking, and the appearance of the bay was certainly pleasing, if not exactly beautiful. On the south side lay the town, at the back of which rose the dark and heavy looking Table Mountain on the left, and to the right, the range of hills, which, to a whimsical imagination, present a rude resemblance to a lion. The actual height of Table Mountain is not so great as would be imagined at the first sight,

owing probably to the immense width of its upper part, which misleads the eye. It is 3582 feet above the level of the sea, and perfectly flat at the top, from whence it derives its name. There are, also, a number of other hills in its vicinity, which resemble it in shape, but none are to be compared with it in size, or in the peculiar flatness of its surface, which appears as if it had once been conical, but that the higher part had been sliced off. Coming in, as we did, early in the morning, we had an opportunity of seeing to perfection, the curious appearance of the collection of mist upon its summit, which has, not unaptly, been termed the table cloth. When this is spread in fine weather, it is generally supposed to be an indication of a change for the worse, but during the winter months, it may generally be seen every morning before the sun has acquired sufficient power to disperse it.

The Lion's head, to the right of the town, (from the anchorage) is considerably lower, being only 2166 feet in height, and is covered with a

scanty pasture, on which a number of sheep are kept.

The town, which was built principally by the Dutch, is clean and regular, and some very tolerable hotels are to be found, two of them, indeed, would pass muster in England, as far as regards their accommodation, and if the provisions are not of the first order, it is more the fault of the country, than of the proprietors.

Grapes, when in season, are excellent, and a great luxury to those just coming off a sea voyage, who must, however, be supposed to be gifted with sufficient sense to use them in moderation. The soil in this neighbourhood is particularly adapted to the cultivation of the grape, which attains to a great state of perfection, especially at Constantia, where the wine of that name is made, and which owes its excellence to the care taken with its manufacture, as much as to the soil. No fruit is allowed to be used that is not perfectly ripe, and every stalk is carefully excluded; by which means the finest flavour is given to the wine, which, when

genuine, is delicious; but the manufacturers, finding so good a sale, have been tempted to adulterate it, as a means of increasing their profits. Of this fact no better proof can be given, than that the quantity sold annually, considerably exceeds the quantity manufactured. There are ten or twelve different sorts of wine made here, and in the neighbourhood, all varying in their flavour, according to the quality of the farms upon which they are made, but pretty much alike in their general character.

Fish are here more abundant than at Ascension, and fine ones, very much resembling our English pike, may be bought for a penny a piece; here the only difficulty the fisherman has to contend with, is the finding a purchaser, for if he could be sure of selling as many as he would be able to catch in a night, he would very soon become a rich man, even if they were all to be disposed of at the low rate of only one penny a piece. No sooner had we come to an anchor, than the sailors commenced making fishing tackle, and getting every thing ready for

night, at which time the best sport is always to be had. Within the short space of an hour after sun-set, the deck was covered with an immense number of snook, Cape salmon, and two or three other sorts of fish. There were, moreover, a quantity of sea crayfish, which were caught with a very simple apparatus, being nothing more than an iron hoop of a water cask, with rope yarns looped backwards and forwards, to form a large loose sort of net work, in the centre of this an old pork bone was tied, and the whole lowered down to the bottom of the water. On being pulled up every ten minutes, one, two, or sometimes three crayfish were found upon it, having got entangled amongst the yarns, being much too large to slip through, and not quick enough to get off. The number thus caught was so great that two large tubs were filled with them, and put down in the forecastle, to be kept to take to sea, but during the night they contrived to crawl out, and disperse themselves all over the place, so that any one of the men getting up to go on deck, would tread upon two or three of them in

his way, or perhaps find one snugly rolled up in his trousers. They are very coarse and hardly worth eating, as they taste so strong, that a great quantity of vinegar and mustard is required, to make them palatable. Jack, nevertheless, likes them amazingly, and the cook is generally pretty well employed during the whole of the day in boiling them.

A most singular phenomenon is often to be seen in this Bay, which is, that one vessel may be coming in, and another going out, at the same time, both being before the wind; so that the one would have it at N.W., and the other at S.E., there being at that time only the distance of the width of the Bay between them. This may appear impossible, but is accounted for by the peculiar formation of the rocks at the foot of Table Mountain, which turn the course of the wind in the form of a half circle; thus the same breeze which sweeps in at the one end, is actually the same as that which is emitted at the other. Owing, also, to the sudden and violent gusts, to which any hilly

country is subject, vessels may often be seen staggering under their canvass with a strong breeze, and a boat, not five hundred yards from them, with its sail flapping about in a perfect calm.

With regard to the history of our obtaining possession of the Cape of Good Hope, our reason for taking it is rather singular. English and Dutch vessels had been in the habit of touching here for a great length of time, without either of them ever forming the design of making themselves masters of it, until the year 1620, when we seized upon it, simply for this reason, that we discovered that the Dutch intended to do so in the course of the following year, and, consequently, thought it advisable to be beforehand with them. After changing hands once or twice, it was delivered up to the Dutch, by one of the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens, in 1802, upon the condition that it was to be so far considered a free port, that English and French vessels should be allowed to trade there upon paying the same duties as those belonging to the Dutch. Four years afterwards, it again fell

into our hands, having been retaken by Sir Home Popham, and Sir David Baird, and has since then remained in our possession.

CHAPTER V.

DIFFERENCE OF TEMPERATURE BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN HEMISPHERES. — SPEAKING A VESSEL. — CURIOUS APPEARANCE PRECEDING THE S. E. TRADE. — JOHANNA. — FIRST APPEARANCE. — KING'S PILOT. — PEERAGE FALLEN LOW. — MAJESTY BURLESQUED. — THE PALACE AND ROYAL SPLENDOUR. — THE DUKE. — LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA. — THE TOWN. — PRIMITIVE IRON FOUNDRY. — DEPARTURE.

Be that the king,
I've seed a chap at Bartlemy fair
More like a king than that chap there.
Old Song.

ALTHOUGH the Cape of Good Hope is situated at exactly the same distance to the southward of the Equator, that the other extremity of Africa is to the northward of it, still the heat experienced here is never so great as that which is felt by the inhabitants of the northern districts; and, indeed, the temperature of the southern hemisphere generally, is considerably less than that of the opposite

one. As a proof of this difference, we hear of ice-bergs being seen in the immediate vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, whereas, on this side of the Equator, the lowest latitude in which they are ever found, is about the forty-third degree. But a much more convincing proof than this, is afforded us by Mr. Lyell, in his work on geology, where, in speaking of this subject, he says, that in the island of Georgia, which is in the fifty-third degree of south latitude, or the same parallel as the central counties of England, the perpetual snow descends to the level of the ocean. When we consider this fact, and then recollect that the highest mountains in Scotland do not reach the limit of perpetual snow in this hemisphere, we can form some idea of the difference of temperature between the climate of this country, and that of the corresponding parallel of south latitude. This is mainly attributable to the small quantity of land in the tropical and temperate zones south of the line, and which, on looking at a map of the world, will be found to bear a very small proportion to the rest. There

is, however, another circumstance taken into consideration by Mr. Lyell, which is that the immense volume of water of the Gulf stream, which is constantly rushing to the northward, becoming so warmed by its passage through the torrid zone, that it acquires a temperature ten degrees higher than the air, must necessarily have some effect in adding to the heat of that part of the world through which it then passes.

These causes will account for the fact, that in passing about two degrees to the southward of the Cape of Good Hope, we experienced a cold almost equal to that of the corresponding season in England, which obliged us once more to rout out our warmest clothing, which we had carefully packed away, under the idea that we should have no further use for it, until our return to England. Uncomfortable as every place is when cold, there is no other situation in which the full wretchedness of it is experienced to the same extent as on board a ship. Exercise, which on shore is the best remedy, is here not available to a sufficient extent,

and the very nature of the materials of which the ship is composed, renders fire a most dangerous element, and one which cannot be used with too much caution, which, moreover, is rendered the more necessary from the motion of the vessel, as a single lurch or plunge might, in the absence of care, be sufficient to cause its entire destruction. For this reason, then, no help is to be derived from stoves, for, although there is generally one kept in the cuddy during very cold weather, still it is of little service to the cabins, where the wind whistles in through so many holes and cracks, and all that can possibly be done at such times is to remain the best part of the time in bed, or derive warmth from the application of hot brandy and water.

The time which it was necessary to remain in this cold latitude was, however, luckily for us not long, for there being always a good breeze, the distance was soon got over, and we once more turned our head to the northward; having thus got safely past all the dangers and troubles attendant upon doubling the much dreaded Cape, to

which the original name of "the Stormy" seems more appropriate, unless its present name be supposed to imply that it requires a great deal of Hope to carry seamen through the trials which it sometimes gives to their patience and perseverance. These, however, generally occur to those who are endeavouring to pass it homeward bound, when the strong westerly gales, which were so favourable to ourselves, would be what is called "right in their teeth," or, in plainer English, directly contrary; but for us it had no very great terrors, but only the inconvenience of cold weather, attended with misty drizzling rain, which made us not at all sorry to know that it was fairly passed, and that a day or two would again restore us to the more delightful warmth of the tropics.

For the first time during the whole passage, we here spoke a vessel, which is always an exciting scene, even to those who have witnessed it many times before, but to those who have never done so it is particularly interesting, especially if the hindmost vessel be much the fastest sailer, which was

the case with the old Worcester, in the present instance, for what was but just visible in the horizon in the morning, was sufficiently near at noon to enable us to distinguish her rig, nation, &c. There is considerable pleasure to be derived from watching how much our own vessel gains upon the other, then there is her appearance to be criticised, and various other sources of amusement, until at length we have approached so near as to be able to make the voice heard from one to the other. The commander of the largest ship, of course, takes upon himself to hail first, but he does it with dignity, and through the medium of a beautifully bright speaking trumpet, begins the conversation with "Ship ahoy." Presently the skipper of the smaller craft, who is generally a little man in his shirt sleeves, jumps up upon the hammock rails, and, making a natural speaking trumpet of his hands, roars back "Holloa." This is merely a preliminary, to attract attention to the next sentence, "What ship's that?" Then follow the usual questions and answers, concerning the

whence coming and where bound, &c. Upon our captain's asking, for custom's sake, "What is your longitude?" the other, who was a Yankee, replied, that "He guessed he was rather out of his calculation, cause he'd smashed his chronometer some weeks ago, but he reckoned he was about ———" giving a position, which we informed him, for his satisfaction, was *only* ninety miles wrong. After the usual exchange of compliments, we re-set the sails, which had been taken in to allow the other vessel to keep up with us, and away shot the Worcester again, leaving the Yankee far behind, and before night she had dwindled down to the same small speck astern, that she had appeared ahead in the morning. It is at sea, and on the open sea alone, that the full beauty of a ship is seen to perfection: the graceful symmetry of the taper spars may please the landsman's eye, in harbour, but who that has seen, would not prefer to behold her when with

> Her white wings flying
> She walks the waters like a thing of life,
> And seems to dare the elements to strife.

On the following day we again fell in with the S. E. trade, but the indications of its approach, which are generally seen at least a day before its arrival, were, on this occasion, most extraordinary. During the whole night, masses of dark clouds were constantly rising to the southward, and passing over to the northward, occasioning considerable anxiety to the officer of the watch, from their resemblance to squalls. They at length ceased, but in their place was a heavy bank, extending from S. W. to S. E., this gradually rose, and for some time bore a very mischievous appearance; its motion was so slow as to be hardly perceptible, until it had attained a considerable height, when its advance was more easily marked by the occultation of the various stars. When the upper part of it had reached the point immediately over head, its appearance was most singular; to the northward the sky was clear and cloudless, and the stars unusually brilliant, whilst, at the same time, over the whole of the other part of the heavens, this dark black impenetrable mass, was

spread like a curtain; the outline was as clear and well defined as the edge of the water bounding the horizon, and the stars were not first dimly obscured by a thinner covering of mist, but were, at one moment, shining bright, and, at the next, engulphed as it were by the advancing mass. At this point, the sky once more began to clear in the horizon, and thus rendered visible both ends of the cloud, which might be compared to an immense iron shade, working upon an axis at east and west, and drawn slowly across the heavens, from south to north. As soon as it had passed, the sky was beautifully clear, and, on the following morning, the trade wind set in.

At the northern extremity of the Mozambique Channel, which is the passage between Madagascar and the east coast of Africa, lies the island of Johanna. The first appearance of it is exceedingly pretty, and, being thickly covered with wood, it appeared to better advantage in our eyes, from the nature of its beauty contrasting so strongly with the barrenness of the two rocky islands we had

previously visited. It being the first time our captain had been here, he was rather puzzled to know where the town could be, for at first there is not the slightest appearance of any habitation whatever, or, indeed, of there being any inhabitants at all; at length, however, a boat was seen making for the shore, and, by watching the point towards which it was steering, and directing our course to the same, we came in sight of what apppeared, at a distance, to be a large fort, and which had been hidden by the trees, on a projecting part of the shore, which had intercepted our view. Immediately upon letting go our anchor, we were surrounded by a number of native canoes, which are made of trees hollowed out, but none of them appeared to have any thing for sale; only one of these came close to us, and the rest all remained at a distance, looking on, as we in our vanity imagined, with admiration. The owner of the one in question came on board, and, being asked, in Hindoostanee, by the captain, who he was, replied in most excellent English, "king's pilot, sir." He then proceeded to ask

sundry questions relative to our destination, reason for coming here, and, finally, intimated his approbation of the place we had chosen to anchor in, and, having paid some high compliments to the ship, informed us, that it always gave him great pleasure to come on board English vessels, as they were always kept in such beautiful order, and that he admired them much. With a profusion of bows, and fine speeches, this important personage took his leave, being obliged, he said, to go and make his report to the king, who, he had no doubt, would be very anxious to pay us a visit.

No sooner had he taken his departure than another boat came alongside, and its owner informed us that he was Lord Nelson, and that he would be exceedingly happy to do any washing we might require. Next came the Duke of Wellington, loudly extolling the superiority of his pumpkins over those of his rival vender, Lord Cornwallis. Every one of these petty merchants styles himself a prince, and assumes some high sounding title from our peerage, by which he is

known, and the owner of the finest name looks upon himself as superior to his less fortunate neighbours; no attempt, however, is made to dispute the claim of any individual to a particular title, and a case of two contending for the right of bearing some much admired name never occurs, were this to be so, the scene, which is quite absurd enough of itself, would be rendered doubly ridiculous by the rivalry of two Lord Nelsons, each one stoutly insisting that he is the real original Lord Nelson, or a pumpkin vending Wellington, assuring us that he is the only genuine Duke, and that the rival aspirant for fame and profit, is only a counterfeit. Should death occur, the name may then pass on to another man, and, in some cases, titles become extinct; this we discovered from the second mate, who had been here before, enquiring after some old friend who gloried in the appellation of the Duke of York, and who it appeared was dead, and the title expired with him.

Presently a great commotion took place amongst all these great men, and each one hurried into his

boat as fast as possible, and pulled away in the direction of the town, as if they were endeavouring to get first to some particular point. The cause of all this stir appeared to be that the king was coming to pay us a visit, and the princes and dukes were required to form his train. The procession having arrived, his majesty was received with all the honour due to so august a sovereign, and was met at the gangway by the captain. After much bowing and ceremony, he was ushered into the cuddy, and as soon as he had sat down himself, a few of the principal of his retinue were permitted to do the same, the greater part, however, were not allowed this indulgence, and stood round. The king then proceeded to inform us, through his interpreter, that his queens having heard that there were ladies on board, had sent them a cake, which he begged they would accept. This was, of course, done, although serious doubts were entertained of there being any possibility of eating it, even though it had been made by the hands of a queen; upon a subsequent trial this

fear proved ill founded, in proof of which, the present did not last very long.

The interpreter next made known that the king was particularly anxious to know how her majesty Queen Victoria was, and expressed great satisfaction at our reply, that she was quite well.

There is a certain dignity of manner, and peculiar expression of countenance, which is ever attendant upon majesty, and distinguishes the sovereign from his subject, whether he be lord of a few hundred acres, or governor of half the world; and even about this half civilized chief of a mere tribe, there was the true blood plainly discoverable in the slight but graceful inclination of the head, which he made in acknowledgment of a compliment. After partaking of tea and sweet biscuits, (for being a mussulman he refused wine,) his majesty rose to take leave, and in doing so condescended to shake hands with every one of us in turn. This was an honour none of us had ever experienced before, and so fully were we impressed with a sense of its extent, that we endeavoured to keep the hand a

king had pressed as free from pollution as possible; but by next morning it was found necessary to wash it, and all that remained for us to do, was to talk as largely as possible of our intimacy with a real live king.

On the following day, we went to return the visit, and going to the palace, sent in to say that we wished to do so; after a few minutes delay, in order, we suppose, to give his majesty time to put on his robes of state, we were ushered into the presence, by the king's eldest son, who spoke very fair English, and acted as interpreter. His majesty was seated on a small couch, which was placed by his bed side, and chairs were placed for our accommodation. His robes were excessively fine, but had evidently been made by piecemeal, and the ornaments collected and added at different times; for the gold lace work of the upper part did not at all correspond with that of the lower, and in one or two places silver had been introduced. The robe itself was composed of a crimson velvet, which, when new, must have made a very handsome dress,

but was now beginning to look rather the worse for wear. His crown, or rather it should be called his head dress, was composed of the same material, but made in the form of a lancer's cap; in addition to the profusion of gold lace, which was so plentifully bestowed over the other part of his dress, the crown was adorned with a number of precious stones, of an inferior kind, with which the island abounds, which, although their intrinsic value was not much, yet imparted a glittering appearance, which was all that was required. If we were to draw conclusions from appearances, we should say that, even in this retired island, with but, comparatively speaking, a handful of subjects to govern, he was nevertheless not an exception to that general curse attending royalty, that

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,

for immediately over his bed were suspended daggers, swords, and other instruments of self defence, so placed that he could instantly lay his hand upon any one of them in case of need. Casting our eyes round the room, if we may call by so comfortable

a name a place which had four walls and only half a roof, we could not help smiling at the extraordinary collection of miscellaneous articles which he had accumulated, all which were arranged in small recesses in the walls, without any regard whatever to either ornament or use. Looking glasses seemed to predominate, but these were all placed so high that they rendered very little service, with the exception of one which was immediately opposite the royal couch. The next articles of which there was the greatest assortment, were decanters and wine glasses, the exact use of which to mussulmen we did not quite perceive. Saltcellars, inkstands, tumblers, lamps, and, in fact, any thing which was made of glass, seemed to be his particular craving, whilst china ware was comparatively disregarded; and we noticed a magnificent punch bowl, that was worth the whole collection of glass put together, thrust into an out of the way corner, to make room for a large glass lamp shade. Shortly after our arrival, the large folding doors at the side were thrown open, and one of the young princes acted

as usher to some great man, whom he announced as "The Duke," and in stalked a fine looking man, with a heavy cavalry sword clanking after him. Turning to the throne, and making a slight obeisance as he passed, he took a seat upon a long bench, which was placed at the right hand of the king. A much finer man we certainly never saw, for, although his limbs were large and rather clumsy, yet it was evident that a proportionate quantity of muscle had not been forgotten. This, as our friend the king's son informed us, was the king's elder brother; and upon our enquiring how it came to pass that the younger brother had succeeded to the crown before the elder one, he told us that "the Duke" was a quiet man, and considering no doubt "what infinite heart's ease must kings neglect, that private men enjoy," preferred, like a sensible man as he was, to live comfortably upon what little he possessed, rather than be troubled with the cares of royalty.

The next arrival was one of the ministers, who spoke English remarkably well, and was, altogether,

a very sensible and tolerably clever man; he had, it seemed, travelled a great deal, and had been over half the world, and, upon our complimenting him upon his good English, he informed us that he had been five years in England, and had also gone through Persia and China. He appeared to have been employed as an interpreter by some of our great people, for he talked with ease of Lord this, and the Earl of that, with whom he was travelling, and related a number of little anecdotes, which we knew were correct. He then gave us a description of his living in London, and the wonder and amazement which he felt upon his first arrival, at the immense traffic and size of the place; and his opinion of the different places and things which he saw, especially his account of the theatres, were particularly amusing. The first time that he visited our great city, he came by ship round the Cape of Good Hope, so that he had no opportunity of being at all prepared, by seeing smaller towns first, for the extraordinary sight which awaited him, but coming up the Thames, with all his ideas of a town

consisting of a dozen mud huts, fresh upon him, burst as it were thus suddenly into the midst of the metropolis of the world.

One of our boat's crew now brought in a basket, which contained our present to the king, and being placed in the centre, was unpacked at once. The contents, which, having been informed of his majesty's predilection for glass, consisted of some odd pint decanters, tumblers, and little stained articles of fancy work, were all arrayed upon the table before him, and each one was, in turn, examined by every one present. As soon as his majesty had completed his investigation, and enquired the use of the different articles which he did not understand, (which, by the bye, was most essential, considering that they were to be stuck upon a shelf, and never, perhaps, taken down again), the interpreter was directed to inform us that the king was exceedingly delighted, and thanked us very much. He also enquired if we liked smoking, for that his majesty was about to enjoy his pipe, and hoped that we would join him; thinking it better

that we should contrive, if possible, to use our own cigars, and not be offered some of their combinations of tobacco and sugar, we determined to be beforehand with him in the proffer of a cheroot, and accordingly succeeded; for in this particular we did not feel the same deference to kingly pleasure as the friends of Artaxominus the Great, who, on receiving the permission, "you smoke what you please," replied,

> Whate'er your majesty shall deign to name,
> Short cut, or long, to us, is all the same.

During a conversation, upon all sorts of subjects, the neighbouring islands, Mohilla, and Mayotta, happened to be mentioned, and the king then informed us that the French had a settlement at Mohilla, and that at one time he was afraid of their endeavouring to take possession of Johanna, he therefore wrote to the British Government, begging its protection, and entrusted his letter to the commander of some man of war that was going home; to this, however, he received no reply, but he showed us a letter which he had received from Lord

Palmerston, (when in office), which he begged we would read to him, in order that he might see if it agreed with the Arabic translation on the other side. It was a mere letter of ceremony, stating that her majesty Queen Victoria was glad to hear that he had attained to the dignity of the crown, and that she hoped that he would govern his people well and wisely, bearing in mind, that the only way to be respected by his subjects, was to respect them, and so on, concluding with a request that he would not allow such a disgraceful practice as that of keeping slaves, to exist in his island, and with a few complimentary sentences at the end, to the intent that he might always be sure of her good esteem so long as he behaved himself, and that she would be happy to hear from him occasionally. The letter was signed "Palmerston," and sealed with a large red patch, which enabled the good boy to whom it was addressed, to distinguish it from the rest of his important papers, which, however, were not very bulky, as the whole of his state documents were contained in a large desk. The

perusal of this letter is, no doubt, inflicted upon all who come to visit him, for if we might judge from the twinkling of his eyes, the kind expressions therein contained, coming from the most powerful sovereign in the world, afforded him considerable gratification. As soon as it had been carefully folded up, and put back again in its place, he began to ask a number of questions, the first of which was, "who is this Lord Palmerston?" this we explained to him, and, by answering all his queries, one after the other, we found that we were drawn into giving a pretty tolerable account of our constitution and customs; we explained to him the mysteries of King, Lords, and Commons, and that one without the others could do nothing; a few of the chief principles of our laws, and afterwards descended to the minor topics of such other of our regulations as he chanced to enquire about, or which suggested themselves to our memories.

Having thus imparted to him the outlines of the best method of governing a kingdom, from which

he might, perhaps, take a few hints for the better regulation of his own, we were about to take our leave, when a tray, covered with eatables, made its appearance. Knowing, from the experience of the previous night, that they made very tolerable sponge cake, we were in hopes that there might be some of it now brought for our lunch, but upon the luxuries being surveyed they were found to consist of a cold pudding, and some English preserved cherries; the latter we were sure would be good, and supposing, from the fact that the two first eatables we had seen were so good, that the pudding would have been so too, we ventured to attack it, but no sooner had we taken the first mouthful, than we were miserably undeceived, and great efforts were required to enable us to get it down. It was not unlike a suet pudding in appearance, but the taste was very much as if tallow had been substituted for suet in its composition. What to do with it was really a matter for serious consideration, for eating it was entirely out of the question, and leaving it would

insult our royal. host; in this dilemma we were obliged to pursue the same course as little boys who have an antipathy to fat, are obliged to do at schools, where they are not allowed to leave it on their plates, and, accordingly, dropped it upon the ground by accident. For drink, green cocoa nuts were brought, which, being the first we had seen, we did not exactly understand. Following the captain's example, however, we succeeded tolerably well, in drinking the water out of the shell itself, which is the correct mode, for it then tastes much fresher and cooler than if poured out into a glass. This fruit, which has been provided by nature as a relief to thirst, which in these hot climates especially, must be more intolerable than hunger, is abundant in almost every tropical country, and is particularly valuable, as it affords in itself both meat and drink. Whilst young and in its green state, each nut contains, on an average, about three quarters of a pint of clear liquid, resembling water in appearance, but rather sweet to the taste; which, when taken early in the morning, before

the sun has had time to warm it, is particularly agreeable and refreshing.

Amongst the numerous valuable presents which the king had had made to him, was a little Dutch clock, which was fixed at the head of his bed. Much to his annoyance, this had stopped about two months before, and all the united genius of his wise men, was unable to discover what was the matter with it. At the suggestion of the minister who had been in England, our opinion was asked concerning the probable cause of its stoppage; we replied that we could not tell without examining it, and the clock was, accordingly, taken down for our inspection. Putting on a very grave face, and pulling the wheels about in a very scientific manner, as though we understood all about it, we delivered as our judgment, that there was nothing much the matter with it, as it went very well when in our hands, and stopped immediately it was hung up again, which suggested to us that it must be simply the fault of its position, which turned out to be that its pendulum struck against the wall;

having altered this defect, and set the clock going again, we were rewarded by a look of such extraordinary condescension, that, being unaccustomed to the smiles of royalty, we hardly knew how to return it.

We then went out for a walk to look at the town, which consists of a number of very small houses, packed together as closely as possible, leaving just barely room to walk between the rows, as if the object in building the town had been to provide as much accommodation in as small a compass as possible; it is not unlikely, however, that this might really have been the reason, for the whole is contained within walls, which if any ground had been wanted in allowing width of streets, would have been obliged to be extended, if the population had increased so much as to require more room, or else the houses must have been built outside, and liable to attacks from the natives of the neighbouring islands. Be that as it may, the little alleys which answer the purpose of streets, are so narrow, that neighbours can shake

hands across them without going out of their houses. Whilst criticising these faults in their town, we must bear in mind that most of our own in England were very nearly as bad a century ago, and that even to the present day, there exist in some of our oldest cities, little narrow poking streets, where opposite houses almost touch at the top. These narrow passages are not, however, without their advantages, for greater space is thus afforded for the interiors of the houses, which are tolerably large; they are almost all built upon the same plan, which consists of a vestibule, varying in size according to the rank of the owner, and a large room with a stone floor. They have no idea of constructing rooms one above the other, or of making a ceiling, but all the arrangements of the house are upon the ground, and the whole is open up to the roof itself; this is the more necessary, as the light is admitted from above, and the contrivance of making a window for this purpose, appears to have entirely escaped them. The rooms of the principal people are distinguished by the

furniture being of European manufacture, and consisting of chairs, tables, &c. whilst those of the poorer classes are only furnished with articles of use, such as a block of wood for a seat, and a large red earthen jar to contain water; but the walls of every house, whether rich or poor, are full of a number of pigeon holes, in which are deposited all their treasures and ornaments. In the centre of one of the longest sides, are large folding doors, through which is the entrance from the vestibule, and immediately opposite, in the centre of the other side, is another space, which leads into an inner-room of smaller dimensions, in which the wives reside; this is separated from the outer one by a curtain, from behind which we could see the little black faces of inquisitive children occasionally peeping to look at the white strangers. The principal objects which attract the eye at a distance, are a mosque with an insignificant dirty looking minaret, and a fort, which is situated upon the hill at the back of the town, but which we did not visit, owing to the intense heat of the sun

being unfavourable to toiling up steep ascents. In preference to this we accepted an offer of the Prince of Wales, as we called him, from his being the king's eldest son, to go and look at his garden, which was little more than a small portion of the wood, save that paths had been cut through the jungle, and in some places small tracts had been cleared, and applied to the cultivation of oranges and pine apples. Producing some mats made of interwoven plantain leaves, he made us sit down, and sent a number of his men who were at work, to get fruit, of various descriptions, from the neighbouring trees, of which we ate almost too plentifully, as it was new to us to be able to pick oranges and pine apples as we would gooseberries in England. Pomegranates, which were abundant, were, unluckily, not ripe, but the oranges were just in season, and on our expressing a wish to purchase some to take to sea with us, the young prince immediately ordered a number to be picked, and put in a basket, but would not hear of taking any thing for them. Going down to our boat

again, we had an opportunity of seeing an iron foundry, which, from its primitive appearance, we would imagine to be not unlike that used by Tubal Cain, "the instructor of all artificers in brass and iron," for certainly it did not appear that the blacksmiths of Johanna had derived any benefit from the improvements which have been made in the art of working in metals, during the thousands of years that have elapsed since its first invention. The furnace was made of a few loose stones, in the middle of which was the fire, and the bellows, which were the most original part of the apparatus, were nothing more than a sheep skin sewn up at one end, so as to leave only a small aperture for the wind to come out, and the other end was drawn together like the mouth of a lady's reticule. The bellows man sitting upon his haunches, holds one of these skins in each hand, and opening the mouth of one to admit the air, he then presses down, and thereby squeezes it out through the small hole at the other end; when that one is empty, the other is full, and being used in the same manner, keeps

up a constant supply of wind. Once more calling upon the king, to take our leave, and thank him for the civility and attention he had shown us, we went off to the vessel, which we found filled with a large quantity of pumpkins and nobility; together with a number of the more humble individuals, who did not rejoice in fine sounding titles, endeavouring to dispose of shells, coral, monkies, and fruit, and so anxious were they about their business, that it was found a matter of great difficulty to get rid of them, even though they were told that the ship was going away, and it was not until the anchor was up, and the sails actually set, that they could be induced to take themselves off, and then finding that every minute was adding considerably to their distance from the shore, they betook themselves to their boats, and dropped astern, and, before night, we had almost lost sight of that little burlesque upon majesty, with its pumpkin-vending dukes, and clothes-washing princes.

CHAPTER VI.

CALCUTTA.—THE SANDHEADS.—DIAMOND HARBOUR.—JAMES AND MARY.—PILOT SERVICE.—GARDEN REACH.—FORT WILLIAM.—MARRIAGE TRAFFIC.—THE CITY AND THE WEST END.—PALKEES.—TANK SQUARE.—BLACK HOLE.—NATURAL SCAVENGERS.—BOTANICAL GARDENS.—A BORE.—HINDOO MYTHOLOGY.—FESTIVAL IN HONOUR OF SHIVU.—CASTE.—MARRIAGE.

> It is a noble city that we seek;
> Thou wilt behold magnificent palaces,
> And rich bazaars, whither from all the world
> Industrious merchants meet, and market there
> The world's collected wealth.
>
> *Southey.*

ONE of the strongest proofs of the high state of perfection to which the art of navigation has attained, is manifested in the approach to the mouth of the Hooghly, which is called the Sandheads, from the immense quantity of sandbanks which have accumulated there, which being so dangerous to shipping, no vessel, except perhaps the very

small ones, would ever attempt to enter it without having a pilot on board. In order, therefore, that they may not be delayed by being obliged to wait for one, and at the same time run no risk in going too far in shore, two brigs are constantly cruising backwards and forwards between two given points, which are well known to all ship masters going to that part of the world, and all vessels consquently, shape their course so as to fall in with one of these brigs, which shows the exceeding accuracy of the art by which they are enabled to steer their course to a mere spot after having traversed 14,000 miles of water, without perhaps having once seen land during the whole time. This, which would appear wonderful enough even in the day, when there would be the additional advantage of being able to discover an object for six or eight miles on each side, was rendered still more so by our approaching the land at night; but to a careful seaman "the night is as clear as the day," and the compass upon which he depends, is as correct at one time as the other. About midnight a blue light was seen a-head,

and was immediately answered by us with another. This, however, appeared not to have been seen by those on board the brig, for had they done so, they should have then hoisted a signal lantern as a guide for us; in order, therefore, first to attract their attention to the proper quarter, a gun was fired, and another blue light displayed immediately afterwards. This had the desired effect, and steering in the direction of the light which was then shewn, we were soon enabled to distinguish the outline of the vessel herself. When within a few hundred yards of her, we hove to, and a pilot came to us in a small boat. To save the trouble of anchoring, and yet not arrive at the mouth of the river before daylight, all the sails were taken in, except just sufficient to keep the ship moving at the rate of about a mile an hour, by which means we were placed in the best position to avail ourselves of the full strength of the tide which began to flow at day-break.

The lower part of the Hooghly is of such a width, that the land on either side is barely discernible, and consequently affords but little to in-

terest the traveller, until his arrival at Diamond Harbour, which is about 50 miles from the sea, and half way between it and Calcutta. At this point the river first begins to assume any of those pretensions to beauty, for which in some of its upper parts, it stands unrivalled.

Owing to the dangers attending the navigation of this river, Diamond Harbour was selected as the place where in olden times, that splendid fleet of merchant ships belonging to the East India Company used to lay; for drawing so much water as they did, and the intricacies of the river not being then so well known as they are now, it was a matter of great risk and danger to take them this additional fifty miles up to Calcutta. They were therefore loaded by means of smaller vessels, in which the cargo was sent down and transhipped into these castles on the deep. These fine old ships are now almost gone, and even the few that remain, are but a poor specimen of what that noble fleet once was, one of the greatest reasons for pride that ever England possessed. What must

have been the rest of the world's opinion of a nation, whose merchants could support such a navy of their own, and maintain possessions of such an extent, entirely upon their private resources. The breaking up of this service, was at length found essential to the public good, and monopoly obliged to give way to competition. The ships, themselves, have now passed into the hands of Parsees, and the pride of their former days is forgotten, in the more mercenary calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence. In this, as indeed in almost all other cases, the good old days are spoken of with regret at their having passed away; and many are the pleasing recollections and old associations still existing in the memories of those who can call to mind what they used to do "in the Old Company's time," and lament, as well they may, that

Old times are changed, old manners gone.

A little above Diamond Harbour the river divides into two streams, the one upon which Calcutta is situated, turning to the right, at a very sharp

angle, which in so rapid a river, occasions the meeting of the two waters at this point to produce a number of eddies and under currents, which not only cause a large quantity of sand to accumulate, but render them still more dangerous by the difficulty which exists of steering the ship properly, for when once a current catches her on either side, the helm is comparatively of very little use, unless there is sufficient breeze to carry her past these dangers, before any harm has been sustained. This turn of the river is called the James and Mary, owing to the loss of a vessel of that name which went down there. One of the points of the land here is called by the extraordinary name of Luff and be d—d Point, the origin of which is, that owing to the sharpness of the curve, the ship is required to turn at almost right angles, in order to do which, the pilot first gives the helmsman the order to Luff, this has the desired effect, but only in a small degree, perhaps, (as that depends on the strength of breeze at the time) it is therefore repeated in stronger terms, Luff, Luff. It being

now rather a critical position in which the vessel is situated, she having reached the narrowest part of the channel, the pilot is not very particular as to the choice of his words, and selecting the most expressive, roars out, "Luff and be d—d to you." This Jack fully understands, as meaning that it is particularly important to luff as much as possible, and does so accordingly, by which means the vessel passes all these dangers in safety; the pilot almost instinctively ejaculates, "Thank God, we are round that point once more," and calls for a glass of brandy and water, after the anxiety he has just gone through.

The pilots here are formed into a regular service, and in order always to have good and efficient men, who thoroughly understand their business, they are obliged to enter first as leadsmen, and every pilot takes one of these youngsters with him on board the vessel of which he is going to take charge. Their duty is to heave the lead; and they are obliged to keep it going constantly, except in such parts of the river as the pilot knows are so

deep that there is no danger to be apprehended from shoals, at which times the leadsman is allowed a little rest, which consequently impresses on his mind that from such a point to the point where his labours are resumed, the water is deep, and a very few trips up and down will be sufficient to teach him which are the dangerous parts of the river, and subsequent attention and observation will render any one that is not absolutely idle or thoughtless, a very tolerable pilot in the course of a twelvemonth or so. At the end of a certain number of years, they undergo an examination, and are admitted as pilots. In order fully to impress them with the necessity of great caution, the lead line made use of in this river, is much more accurately marked and subdivided than the one in common use, and soundings are given with such precision, that the mark being an inch or two above or below water is noticed. By these means most excellent pilots are ensured, and it very seldom indeed occurs that any accident happens through the inefficiency of any one of them.

From the moment that the James and Mary is passed, the river assumes a beauty which gives it very fair pretensions to rank amongst the finest rivers of the world; on either side are small villages, buried amidst groves of cocoanut trees, the tall leafless trunks of which, form the chief peculiarity of Indian scenery, which, without them would be nothing. An individual tree, standing alone, presents by no means a handsome appearance, for the great length of its trunk, without one single branch or leaf, except at the very top, does not adapt it to standing by itself, but when in a mass, their tufted tops, so different from the generality of trees, have a striking and picturesque appearance. At the distance of two or three miles apart, are semaphores, by means of which the news of a ship's arrival is transmitted to Calcutta, from Diamond Harbour, and a steamer is then sent down to meet her on the way up, thereby effecting a considerable saving of time and expence in the victualling of the ship's company, which, in many cases, pays for the steamer. One having

been sent down for us, we were taken in tow, and all the sails were then nicely furled, the yards accurately squared, and every thing put in order, so that we might present as tidy an appearance as possible, amongst the other ships.

After passing through scenes of perpetually changing beauty, where every turn had some new and peculiar object of interest, we at length arrived at that part which has justly been denominated Garden Reach. Nothing that we have ever seen, at all comes up to the real beauty of this part of the river, for, although there is a want of distance to complete what is more strictly denominated scenery, still there is more of the picturesque in its compactness, and more that really delights the eye, than in all the boasted, and, in our idea, much over rated, scenery of the Rhine, which, we must say, we cannot admire as much as the fortnight-trip travellers profess to do.

Here the bank on our right, is covered with gentlemen's seats, each one of which is situated in the middle of extensive shrubberies, with rich

green slopes extending to the river's side, whilst, on the left, extend the botanical gardens, belonging to the Company, of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, and immediately above them the college for the education of the better class of native youths, forms a conspicuous object. Although each of the beautiful villas would bear a separate description, still, we cannot afford to give it to them, and must merely say of them, collectively, that they are what gentlemen's seats usually are, in situations where nature has already done so much, that little remains for art to improve.

From this scene of quiet, and the contemplation of the beauties of nature, we burst suddenly upon a view which differs as widely from the last, as nature does from art. Having arrived at the end of Garden Reach, a break in the thick groves, on either side, discloses to us The City of Palaces; and not unjustly has this high sounding title been bestowed, for its appearance from the distance is grand beyond description, and fully carries out all preconceived ideas of Indian magnificence.

Fort William, which defends the approach to the city, is considered superior, as a fortress, to any in India, and, situated as it is, upon flat ground, without any assistance from the advantages of natural defence, is, perhaps, equal to any in the world. It was built by Lord Clive, immediately after his defeat of Surajah Dowlah, at the battle of Plassey, in 1757. The range which it commands, though not very extensive, is, nevertheless, quite sufficient to prevent any enemy coming far enough up the river to be able to injure the shipping, which lie above the fort, for it is situated just at the turn of the river, and has an uninterrupted view down Garden Reach, as well as up the harbour; so that it could not only sink any vessels which attempted to pass it, but also prevent their coming beyond a certain point in Garden Reach. This position for the fort was admirably chosen, for, until the enemy could succeed in silencing the battery, they would not have a single one of our ships exposed to their fire, owing to the interposition of the land.

The immense fleet of vessels, through which we were now passing, fully exemplified the quotation which we have adopted for our motto,

> ——— from all the world
> Industrious merchants meet, and market here
> The world's collected wealth.

For amongst the hundreds of national ensigns that were waving in all directions, we could distinguish the two tri-colors of the French and Dutch, the unassuming cross of Denmark, and "the flaunting flag of liberty," with its gaudy stars and stripes, the plain red of the Arab, and the white of the Chinese, whilst above all others in number was

> The flag that braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze,

the red ensign of England. Having carefully threaded our way through the intricacies of a number of vessels, we cast our own anchor about half way between the fort and the town, and abreast the race course, which is the principal place of fashionable resort, in the cool of the evening, when a scene ensues not unlike that in Hyde

Park, with only the exception of its being here upon a much smaller scale. Here may be seen as fine equipages as in London, for the horses and carriages are all sent out from England, at an immense expence. In addition to its being the favourite evening drive, the race course is one of the principal auction marts, for the sale of an article of which a large supply is imported annually from England; we allude to young ladies, who are sent out here as a mere matter of speculation, and in the regular business-like manner consigned to an agent, whose duty it is to dispose of them to the best advantage. For this purpose a carriage is kept, in which the poor girl is placed, after having been made to look as pretty as possible, and is driven about the race course every evening until she is seen, admired, and bought, by some rich old colonel, whose age would befit the character of grandfather better than a husband. Such preposterous alliances never turn out happily, as, indeed, how should they? what thoughts or wishes can a young girl of seventeen have in common with

an old man of sixty? and such are Indian marriages. The girl is perhaps considered lucky in having caught a colonel, but can she look upon him in any other light than as a person kindly provided by nature to find her with means to indulge in extravagance, and live in luxury, which she might otherwise have wished for in vain: but has it not been obtained at the price of happiness, and, what is still worse, does it not involve a temptation to crime, which is almost too strong for human frailty to withstand? So barefaced is the system pursued, that should the agent (for the girl herself is not at her own disposal) be on the point of concluding an agreement with some young man who has six or seven hundred rupees a month, and suddenly hear of an old man who has a thousand, and who wishes to become a purchaser, the first engagement is broken off, *sans ceremonie,* and the young lady's *affections!* transferred to the new *lover!* By these means any girl that is not absolutely ugly, can acquire a fortune, the only stock in trade that is required being a few dresses, and

other vanities, and the only art being that of lolling gracefully in a carriage.

Our attention upon landing was first struck by the size and grandeur of the houses in general, which certainly entitle the city to the name which it has obtained, for truly every house here is a small palace in itself. This, however, only applies to the European part of the town, which is at the east end, for the rest and the greatest part is inhabited almost entirely by natives, and is built in the usual style of the generality of Indian towns; the streets being narrow, crooked, and confined, and the houses composed chiefly of bamboo and mud, with a large mat for the door. Such inflammable materials render a fire doubly awful, from the rapidity with which it extends itself beyond all human power of control; and during the time that we were there we had an opportunity of witnessing the effect of its ravages, in one of the most crowded parts of the city. Hardly has the first flame been discovered, before the house is in a blaze, and, in a very few minutes afterwards, a whole street per-

haps is in a flame. The cries and howling of the poor wretches, who are thus driven out of their homes, is truly pitiable; but, luckily for them, they seldom sustain any loss beyond the actual destruction of the house itself, for clothes they have none, and all the furniture consists of the rude couch upon which they sleep; a brass cup, out of which they drink; and a large family plate, which answers the double purpose of holding their food, and serving for a lid to the pot in which their rice is boiled; an earthen jar to contain water, and their hookah, completes the inventory of their goods and chattels, in the possession of which they are perfectly happy and contented.

To return to the fashionable part of Calcutta, which answers to the west end of London, although it is here the east end. Were a stranger suddenly dropped into one of the streets in this part, and all natives, buffalo carts, and such other occupants of an Indian thoroughfare removed, it would be hardly possible for him to tell that he was not in a European town. The shops display as numerous

a collection of articles as those in England, and on either side of him he sees magnificent hotels, equal to any, and superior to the greater part, of those at home; then there are the carriages of the ladies going shopping, or the gentlemen on their way to their offices, continually rolling past, and all the usual evidences of the luxuries attendant upon wealth, in the grandeur of the houses around him. All doubt as to the fact of this being India is, however presently dispelled, by the yelling of fifty voices, who are incessantly shouting "Palkee sahib," "Sahib palkee," in hopes of getting a fare for their palanquins, which are really one of the greatest conveniences that were ever devised, and even superior to our omnibusses, for this reason, that they carry you where you like, set you down at any particular point, and there wait for two or three hours, or half a day if you will, and all for the very moderate charge of about two shillings a day. To the European, who is unable to bear the heat of the middle day in India, they are not only very convenient, but also the means of enabling

him to transact business which must otherwise be done at the expense of his health, and, perhaps, ultimately his life. In form and appearance they are nothing more or less than a box, about seven feet long, by two feet six inches wide, and three feet in height, with a stout pole projecting from the centre of each end, by which it is carried; it is provided with sliding panels at the sides, so that it can be either open or shut at pleasure; the inside is fitted with a rug or mattress, a pillow for the head, and a stretcher for the feet, and in the decoration of this part much art is used, in order to tempt persons to hire the finest looking one. The operation of getting into them is an art, by the ignorance or clumsy performance of which the new arrival in India is immediately distinguished, in the same manner that the inability to get into a hammock without tumbling out again on the other side, betrays the fresh-caught sailor. The palkee bearers, however, turn this to some account, and should any unfortunate Johnny Raw endeavour (as is often the case) to get in feet first, he will be

pretty sure to be charged somewhere about four times as much as the regular fare. When once in, you lay at full length, and if going a long distance, can read with ease, as the motion with good bearers who step well together is very trifling; the pace is very fair, for although, in addition to the weight of the person who is being carried, that of the palkee itself is considerable, yet they always keep up the same steady jog trot, and get over the ground in a wonderfully short space of time. When any very long distances are to be performed, six bearers are employed instead of four, which is the usual number, and many persons choose this mode of travelling about from one place to another; but in this case the inside is fitted up with drawers and shelves, which adds considerably to the weight. There is a story told of a gentleman who travelled a considerable distance in this manner, but not liking the recumbent posture for so long together, he cut a hole in the roof of his palanquin, through which he put his head, and being guarded from the heat of the sun by an umbrella, was thus enabled

to see the surrounding country to perfection. In order to keep out the heavy dews at night, the piece that had been cut out was made to fit in again, and, being neatly done, did not at all spoil the appearance.

Palkees are to be had in almost any part of the town, but their principal places of resort are the landing places, and a large square, in which are most of the public and principal private offices. It is called Tank Square, from an immense tank of water in the middle, from which the inhabitants are principally supplied, by means of water bearers, of whom a number may be constantly seen there, filling the skins in which it is carried about. At one corner of this square is a small plot of grass, which grows on the very spot where the celebrated Black Hole formerly stood.

The circumstances which rendered it so notorious were these,—In 1756, Surajah Dowlah being jealous of the growing power of the English, attacked, and reduced Calcutta, which was their principal strong hold, and confined 146 prisoners, in a

small room only eighteen feet square. It is hardly possible to conceive the full extent of the sufferings of these men, crowded together into so small a space, in a hot night in India, without any circulation of air; for the only windows were on the west side, and afforded very little relief, as the only quarter from which any wind could possibly reach them, was the east and south, and on these sides there were nothing but dead walls. The door had hardly been closed upon them before they burst into a profuse perspiration, and such incessant draining from the moisture of the body, necessarily brought on intolerable thirst. Water was given them by the guards, who did not do so from motives of kindness, but in order that they might have the savage pleasure of seeing the prisoners fight for it. This was but adding fuel to the fire, and, before they had been confined an hour, many were quite delirious. Within the short space of three hours, one third of the number were dead, and the stench arising from the bodies became intolerable. Numbers died standing, being lite-

rally unable to fall, from the pressure of those behind, who were crowding to the windows, and out of the whole number who had been confined at eight o'clock on the previous evening, only twenty-three survived till six in the morning, at which hour an order arrived for their liberation, and even those were in a high state of fever. Most of these survivors owed their life to imbibing the moisture from their shirt sleeves, and catching the large drops of perspiration which fell, like rain, from their faces.

During the following year, Calcutta was retaken by Lord Clive, who defeated Surajah Dowlah, at the battle of Plassey, and the barbarity which he had shown to his prisoners, met with its due reward, in his own death.

The streets of Calcutta are, generally speaking, clean, and in the European part, broad and open. Scavengers have been kindly provided by nature, in the adjutants, (a species of cormorant) which are seen here in great numbers, sitting on the tops of the chimneys, or the roofs of the houses; they

are particularly serviceable in immediately clearing away any offal or substance which in a short time would become putrid, and taint the air. They present a very singular appearance, when collected together in large numbers on any particular building, for they dispose themselves at such regular distances, and sit for hours together so immovable, that they might readily be mistaken in the dusk of the evening for stone ornaments.

In the native part of the town, and its bazaars, Calcutta is decidedly inferior to Bombay, and we shall therefore reserve the description of them until we arrive at the latter place.

Having heard much of the botanical gardens, we determined to visit them, and were, certainly, rather disappointed. Not but that they are, decidedly, pretty, on the whole, but still, there was nothing very particular about them, and nothing very remarkable to be seen, with the exception of the banyan tree, which, of itself, was worth a day. The extent of ground covered by this single tree, is almost incredible, for the lower branches let fall

a number of shoots to the ground, which take root, and increasing in size and strength, form a natural support to the branch, which is thus enabled to extend itself, horizontally, for a considerable distance beyond the point at which it would be able to bear its own weight; it then stretches out again, and, as it requires more supports, so it throws off more shoots. The tree in these gardens is a very magnificent specimen, and one of the largest, perhaps, that were ever seen; but, beyond this, there is little to interest the ordinary visitor, more than the usual arrangement of any beautiful garden will do. There is, however, this reservation to be made in the comparison between this and other gardens of the same description in Europe, that the peculiarity of Indian scenery, does not admit of being reduced to the compactness of arrangement, upon which the latter generally depends for its beauty, but must have a freedom and wildness of character, which, generally, fails to have so pleasing an effect.

Scarcely had we landed on our return, than we

observed an unusual stir amongst the native boatmen, who, on our enquiring the reason, pointed to the river, and there we saw quite a sufficient cause for the bustle, in the shape of three large waves, which appeared to have been detached from the sea, and came rolling up, one after the other, causing the river to rise and swell so suddenly, that any boats which might be lying on the banks, were instantly swept off, and others, that were previously afloat, were thrown to a considerable distance on land, and left there by the retiring of the water. Directly the roar of these waves is heard at a distance, all the boatmen betake themseves to their dingies, and pull out into the middle of the stream, that being the safest place, for the great mass of water rushes up close to the right hand bank of the river, from which it does not extend very far, but should any unfortunate fellow be unable to get out of its way in time, his boat is generally upset, and he himself, in all probability, drowned. This sudden influx of water is called, as it probably is, a Bore.

During our stay at Calcutta, we had an opportunity of witnessing the ceremony of changing gods, at which time there is a very grand festival, and the gods are carried, in state, all round the town, and at length taken out into the middle of the river in large boats, and then thrown overboard. It would certainly appear that the ingenuity of the priests was employed, to devise as hideous figures as possible, to represent their gods, and, if each one has his separate image, it must require an exceedingly fanciful imagination to conceive such an immense number of figures, all equally hideous, and yet, not too much resembling one another, for the various deities in all their various forms, are said to amount to the almost incredible number of 300,000,000. These, however, are all, more or less, modifications of the same, and, in fact, the whole of this multitude may be resolved into three principal deities, Brumha, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Shivu, the Destroyer. Notwithstanding all the absurd complication of these millions of gods, and the mass of ignorance

and superstition which envelopes the Hindoo mythology, there is still a strange analogy discoverable between it and our own revealed religion. They acknowledge one god, Brumhu, the head and father of all, from whom proceed the three, Brumha, Vishnoo, and Shivu; or, putting it in other words, in whom are contained the three powers of creating, preserving, and destroying. They have thus not only the idea of one presiding deity, but have also the trinity, and moreover approach so near to ourselves, that the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is manifested in the supposition, that the one god Brumhu is resolved into the three, Brumha, Vishnoo, and Shivu, and that these three being each supreme in his own department, are co-equal parts of the one power from which they proceed.

When, however, we descend to the interminable multiplication of lesser deities, the whole system becomes one mass of mystification, in which we can trace out no semblance to a pure religion, unless we look upon this enormous mass of idols as merely representing the various attributes, or

powers, of the three principal deities. But it is in the mode of worship, that this religion principally fails to come up to our ideas of what religion ought to be; for in what light must we regard one which encourages such crimes as self murder; and with what feelings must we look upon the poor fanatic, who, under the full persuasion that he is performing a meritorious act, will throw himself into the Ganges, or allow the wheels of the idol-car to crush him to death?

At certain times of the year, a festival is held, in honor of the god Shivu, at which it is customary for men to throw themselves down from great heights upon iron spikes; it is also meritorious to swing, for a length of time, by a hook, which is passed through the flesh. This we had an opportunity of witnessing, and the manner of performing it is as follows. A post is erected in some convenient spot, about twenty or thirty feet high, across this is placed a long bamboo, which is contrived to work freely in any direction. The man who is going to swing, lays down upon his face, and the

hooks are fixed into his back, through about an inch of flesh; these hooks are then tied to one end of the bamboo, and two or three men then pull down the other end, to which a cord is attached, thus raising the victim up in the air; they then run round and round, and the poor creature is thus suspended, by his flesh, for five, ten, or twenty minutes, according to circumstances. Cutting themselves with knives, having their tongues pierced, and various other devices for self torture, are considered as acceptable offerings to the god, and are commonly practised at this festival.

Not only are such extravagances as these performed, but even suicide is considered meritorious, and many hundreds drown themselves in the Ganges, in the firm conviction that they are performing a good deed, and perish the victims of a degrading superstition.

The Brahmins are the priests, and belong to the highest caste, which they are very careful not to lose, and the preservation of which is attended with many restrictions. Eating food which has

been cooked by one of another caste, drinking from his jar, or smoking his pipe, are sufficient to occasion the loss of caste, which is attended with disgrace; and no one will eat or drink with him, or marry into his family, and all his friends, relations, and even children, disown him. So constant are some of the high castes to the injunctions for the preservation of it, that they would endure the greatest sufferings from hunger and thirst, rather than be relieved, at the hands of one of another caste.

Another ceremony that we had the opportunity of witnessing, was, the marriage of a young son of some wealthy Hindoo. The bride was about six years old, and the bridegroom very little more; but marriage here is no mutual agreement of the parties most interested, but is merely a bargain, arranged by the parents; as soon as it is agreed upon by them, the intended pair are betrothed, and paraded, with great ceremony, from one house to the other. They are then separated for a certain time, and, as soon as they have attained to

years of discretion, they are married again, and, after that, are allowed to live together.

A few of the grosser superstitions, and pseudo-religious barbarisms, such as burning widows on the funeral piles of their husbands, are, gradually, giving way to the introduction of christianity, and, it is to be hoped, that, before long, the inhabitants of so vast a country will be rescued from the depths of their ignorance, to the furtherance of which, their annually increasing intercourse with the more civilized nations of Europe, must necessarily tend.

CHAPTER VII.

PASSAGE DOWN THE HOOGHLY. — INDICATIONS OF A STORM. — REEFING. — A HURRICANE. — REPAIRING DAMAGES.

Japhet. There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf and drops each blossom,
Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,
The thunder's harbinger appears!
It cometh, hence, away.

Byron.

AFTER a stay of rather more than a month in Calcutta, which, however, appeared to be hardly a week, so quickly did the time slip by, amidst the numerous pleasures of the City of Palaces, we once more found ourselves upon the move, being now bound for China. Having with some difficulty extricated ourselves from the mass of shipping which surrounded us on all sides, we were taken

in tow by the Dwarkanauth steam tug. Few persons have any idea of the numbers of really fine looking vessels which we possess in our merchant service; with a frigate every one associates the perfection of order, both in her internal arrangements, as also in her external appearance, but they are apt to connect, with the mere name of merchantman, all that is slovenly, and clumsy. In this idea they are most egregiously mistaken, and we will venture to say, that there are few places in the world where so fine a fleet of ships can be found as those which may be seen in the Calcutta river.

The beauty of the Hooghly, when viewed upon the passage down, loses the greater portion of its effect, from this cause, that, to the stranger who may be going up it for the first time, each succeeding scene surpasses the previous one, and however beautiful each may be in itself, still it loses by comparison with that which at the next instant bursts upon the view, thus keeping the mind in a state of constant admiration, which can never flag,

from the incessant addition of objects which call for an increase of it, rather than allow the slightest abatement. This, however, is not the case on leaving Calcutta, for the most beautiful parts being those which are now seen first, the order is reversed, and the comparison being now always in favour of the scenes which are gone by, operates in diminution of the merits of those present, and the impression left upon the mind of the real beauty of the river is considerably lessened at every mile.

This will, in many cases, have the effect of causing the traveller to form an erroneous opinion of the Hooghly, and, although upon the passage up, his admiration increased at every mile, until he arrived at Garden Reach, which he could not fail to pronounce most beautiful, still, upon again seeing the same scenes, he would be inclined to think that he had very much over-rated them before, and simply for this reason, that as each succeeding one is inferior in beauty to the last, so does his admiration decrease in like proportion,

until it finally dwindles into the belief that there is not so much for the Hooghly to boast about after all. When, however, this last impressson has at length worn off, which it shortly will do, the former opinion will return, and the river will once more appear to him as he first saw it, and as such will receive his unqualified praise.

Having passed down it, and once more arrived at the Sandheads, the steamer returned to Calcutta, and the pilot shortly afterwards left us also. There being a fine moderate breeze, every possible sail was set, and the land being speedily lost sight of, we were once more on the open sea. For the first day the weather was perfectly beautiful, and in our inexperienced eyes appeared likely to continue so; but the captain, it seemed, thought otherwise, for being too old a sailor to be taken in with a blue sky, and relying upon his barometer, which was giving timely warning not to trust to these fine appearances, he ordered all the lighter sails to be taken in, and put down below out of the way, feeling confident that we should have no further use for

them for the next two or three days at any rate. He then proceeded to make other preparations, the object of which was however not apparent to any but himself, for nothing to denote any change in the weather was visible until evening, when the sun went down with an unusually fiery appearance, leaving behind it a cloud of deep crimson.

Two or three of the oldest seamen were assembled on the forecastle, after the work was over, smoking their evening pipes, and studying the appearance of the sunset before them, with an earnestness which showed that the cause of this unusual reduction of sail was no longer a secret to them, whatever it might have been to the less experienced portion of the crew. To these last all was at present a mystery, the sky was clear and almost cloudless, the breeze steady and fair, and they were therefore at a loss to find a reason for the proceeding. Not so with the party on the forecastle, which comprised six or seven of as thorough seamen as ever trod a deck, and men who had sailed under the same commander so long as

to know that he had always a good reason for every thing he did.

"Aye, aye," said the boatswain, a splendid specimen of the English sailor, "the skipper is right, we shall catch it before morning, and there'll be some more of those flying kites (i. e. light sails) in before night yet, or my name's not Jim Gray."

"Aye," said the sailmaker, "and I'm thinking three reefs in the topsails wont be enough for her."

"Three, mon," continued the carpenter, "I'll be unco glad to see the topsails at all."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the officer of the watch instructing the carpenter to have all the hatches battened down, and double tarpaulins nailed over them, which preparation is never made except on extraordinary occasions, and the sight of which caused every one to come on deck to see the cause.

All doubt was put an end to by the shrill call of the boatswain's pipe, followed by a roar from his stentorian lungs, "All hands shorten sail." All

were quickly at their posts, and awaiting the next order, which was the ominous one of "Reef topsails."

"Three reefs, Mr. Gray."

"Aye aye, sir; 'way aloft there."

Hardly were the words uttered, before the rigging was covered with men, whilst those on deck were lowering the yard, placing it in a proper position, and making every thing ready.

The operation of reefing is at all times an exciting scene, especially when, as in the present instance, it is done in fine weather, before the storm has commenced, for there is always a spirit of emulation existing between the fore and main topmen, which makes each do their utmost to surpass the other, and renders the work more like a trial of skill, by which means it is done in half the time that it would otherwise be, and is moreover done better; for it would be an insufferable disgrace to the men of either top, if, from carelessness, they were made to do their work over again.

In an incredibly short space of time the topsails

were reefed, every thing else furled, the lighter yards sent down on deck, and every precaution, which the skill of an old seaman who had been ploughing the deep for forty years could devise, was taken. Not only was every thing done, but it was done with very little trouble now, whereas if it had been put off until the violence of the storm had rendered it necessary, it would have required much longer, and been much more difficult to accomplish, even if it could have been done at all. Our captain was however a man who, being a thorough seaman himself, knew exactly what could be done, and more he did not expect; he knew also the nature of the storm for which he was preparing, and was perfectly well aware that what he had just now ordered, must eventually be right; and he therefore chose to have it well done, with little trouble, a few hours before it was actually necessary, than by delay gain a few miles, and run the risk of losing his ship. A young commander is very often apt to imagine that he has only to give an order and that it must be instantly executed, and the most

important things are often deferred to the last moment, through this foolish conceit; but the old seaman, and the really good officer, is easily distinguished by his being always prepared for any thing that may happen, not by his over cautiousness, but by the soundness of his judgment.

Shortly after the sun had set, the light breeze died away, and it fell perfectly calm, the air then felt intensely hot and close, so much so indeed that we were obliged to come up on deck, being unable to sleep in our cabins, from a feeling almost approaching suffocation. The stars, although visible, were covered with a thin film, which rendered them dull, and thickening by degrees, finally obscured them altogether. Still there was no change; not a breath of air was stirring, and the sails flapping against the masts were the only sounds that broke the death-like stillness of the night. The sky soon became as black as pitch, and not the slightest break in the clouds, which were thickening fast, was perceptible. Still we lay motionless, and the smooth surface of the water

was not yet disturbed by a ripple, but even the most inexperienced were now aware that something awful was at hand, for there was a thickness in the air which made it difficult to breathe, and the dense impenetrable mass seem to hang lower over our heads, as though the heavens were collapsing.

That the crisis could not now be far distant was evident, and presently from out of a part which seemed somewhat blacker than the rest, there shot a flash which completely blinded by its suddenness, accompanied by a crash enough to make the stoutest heart quail with fear. This was the forerunner of the tempest which was now close at hand, and hardly had the effect of the lightning passed away, than we were laid upon our broadside by a gust which, had we not been thus prepared, must have swept away the masts before there could have been time to have reduced the sails.

This having passed over, it again fell calm, and judging from this wild commencement the nature of the storm which was at hand, and that it was one of no ordinary violence, the captain determined

to take advantage of this lull, and even the little sail that was now set was still more reduced, leaving nothing but a close reefed main topsail to meet the coming gale. The gusts now became more frequent, and for the next two hours we were alternately laid upon our beam ends, and immediately afterwards rolling unsteadily in a calm. The intervals between the squalls gradually decreased, and, soon after midnight, these temporary cessations were entirely discontinued, and the full unceasing fury of the tempest was upon us.

During one of the most violent of the gusts, a loud report was heard, which was occasioned by the bursting of the main topsail, which, in one instant, was blown completely into ribands, leaving only the ropes to which the canvass is sewn. We were thus left without a stitch of sail exposed to the storm, the prodigious force of which may be imagined when we consider that its power on the bare masts and rigging alone, was such that, for six hours, we were laying with one side entirely under water, and the lower extremities of the

yards immersed to the extent of five or six feet. The sea, which was being driven before the wind, was now constantly breaking over us, and at one time no less than five feet of water had accumulated in the hold, which there was great danger of our not being able to pump out, if this state of things lasted much longer, as the men were unable to work the pumps, owing to the immense volumes of water which were pouring over the decks, and which prevented the possibility of any attempt being made.

The extreme violence of the gale at length moderated, and a sudden lull allowed us a short respite, which we fondly hoped was to have been the end of our troubles, but the barometer still falling, showed that not only were our hopes vain, but that the worst was yet to come. We were now immediately in the centre of the hurricane, and although it was raging furiously on all sides of us, still we were in a perfect calm, not however to last long, for it shortly afterwards commenced again, from directly the opposite quarter, and blew

more violently than ever. The work of destruction now began, and crash followed crash in rapid succession, as the fore, main, and mizen topgallant masts gave way. The great increase in the sea now caused the ship to roll heavily, and the topgallant masts, which were hanging by their rigging to the topmast heads, were swinging from side to side with such violence that it was feared that they would cause more damage, either by falling on deck, or that they would be too great a strain upon the topmasts, and cause them also to give way. This fear did not prove unfounded, for, after bending and straining for a considerable time, the fore topmast at length fell heavily over the side, dragging with it a mass of rigging, spars, and yards.

The hurricane was still raging with the same violence, and the ship, being now encumbered with this mass of wreck over her side, was unable to contend against it as well as she had hitherto done, and was now straining heavily. In order to ease her, and endeavour to raise the lee side, which was completely under water, preparations were made

for cutting away the masts, in hopes that this diminution of top weight would enable her to right again. This, however, was a step requiring some consideration, and, whilst hesitating about it, the captain, under the impulse of forlorn hope, happened to cast his eye to the sympesometer, which, to his great joy, he perceived had risen slightly, and, therefore, indicated that the worst was passed, and the masts were, consequently, saved.

Soon afterwards the barometer also began to move slowly upwards, and a decrease in the force of the hurricane became plainly perceptible; towards evening it had moderated considerably, and, on the following morning, the weather was tolerably fine.

At daylight "All hands clear wreck" was called, and the immense mass of ropes, which were hanging over the side, and dragging the broken topmast, were cleared away, and the spar itself hoisted on board, to be applied to such purposes as occasion might require. Thus ended the hurricane, which,

with its awful might, shows the insignificance of man, and proves that

> A mightier wizard, far, than he,
> Wields, o'er the universe, his power.

These hurricanes, which are of the same nature as the typhoons in China, have been reduced to a theory, by which their course and direction are laid down, and means afforded for escaping the principal portion of them at sea, or providing against the most dangerous part, which is the sudden shift of wind which always occurs, and which is often attended with fatal results. It has been proved that they have two motions, being at once rotatory and progressive; and that, consequently, their course will form a series of eccentric circles. Their being rotatory will account for the calm, which is always found to exist immediately in the heart of them, owing to the natural tendency of rotation, being to cause divergence from the centre; this is also exemplified in an eddy of water, in the middle of which, a space is found, varying in size, according to the rapidity

of the revolution. It is also evident that, if the motion of the wind be circular, there must be a space in the centre, where there will either be no wind at all, or else, where it will blow from all sides at once, which is an impossibility; it is, consequently, calm, and a vessel, having once reached this part, would remain there, were it not for the progression of the hurricane itself.

The ship being, fortunately, provided with spare spars, of all descriptions, we were enabled to proceed upon our voyage, although at something less than our usual speed, for some days; which, however, was better than being obliged to put back again. By degrees new yards and masts were made, and, in the course of a few days, every thing was in place again, and the vessel put in as efficient a state as before, so far, at least, as regarded the actually necessary part; it was not, however, until after the lapse of some weeks, that all the more minute arrangements were entirely completed, and it was long before all trace of the recent disaster was effaced.

All the little vanities on the quarter deck, which are the pride of the chief mate in particular, inasmuch as they are generally the offspring of his ingenuity, and arranged according to his own taste, were seriously displaced by the rough treatment they encountered, and there being so much other work which was absolutely necessary for the efficient management of the ship, the re-arrangement of the ornamental, was deferred until after the completion of the useful. Many little jobs were obliged to be set aside for the homeward-bound passage, which is, generally, a lazy time, during which the brains of the officers are kept constantly at work, to devise means of employing the men.

Many landsmen would, doubtless, be as much at a loss, as to the occupation of sailors when at sea, as the old woman, whose idea of a sea life was, that sailors had nothing to do but to sit still and let the wind blow them along. So far from such being the case, the general complaint is, that there is too much to be done, but how it is found, is a

matter of no small wonder; it would seem that when a ship was once properly fitted, that was all she required; it is, however, not so, for there is an incessant shortening of one rope, and lengthening another, tarring, painting, or making sails, as long as rope or canvass are left in the store rooms. These, however, are generally expended before the voyage is half over, and, consequently, very little is left to be done on the homeward-bound passage, which is, therefore, the time when any little whims of the chief officer are carried out, which may not be considered of sufficient importance to be done at any other time.

Leaving all these little etceteras to be put in place, by degrees, at some future time, the more important parts received the first care, and the damages were repaired, with so much expedition that our appearance was not by any means disreputable, by the time that we arrived at the Straits of Sunda; at which point we required to be in proper order again, not only because we there fell in with so many other ships, but also on account of the

peculiarities of the navigation amongst islands, and through narrow channels, especially in those latitudes which are subject to such sudden changes of wind and weather, which render it absolutely necessary that a vessel should be in as serviceable a state, and as readily manageable as possible.

CHAPTER VIII.

JAVA.—SUNDA STRAITS.—THE VILLAGE OF ANJIER.—ITS GOVERNOR.—MILITARY DUTIES.—WRECK OF THE INGLIS.—CAPRICE OF JAVANESE TASTE.—PRODUCTIONS OF JAVA.—FRUITS, MANGOSTEEN, CUSTARD APPLE.—THE UPAS TREE.—NUTMEG PLANT.—EDIBLE BIRDS'-NESTS.—ENTRANCE TO BATAVIA.—CORAL ISLANDS.—TRADE.—TOWN.—CLIMATE.—EASTERN PASSAGE.

> Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
> Here earth and water seem to strive again,
> Not chaos like, together crushed and bruised,
> But as the world, harmoniously confused.
>
> *Pope.*

The Straits of Sunda, which are formed by the south-eastern extremity of the Island of Sumatra on the one side, and the north-western part of Java on the other, present the first of a series of tableaux, which, varying only in arrangement, but

unchanging in beauty, abound so plentifully in the eastern seas, where truly it may be said that

every scene
Is rich in beauty, lively, and serene.

Rich, in the softness of its thickly wooded islands which are clothed with most luxuriant verdure to the water's edge; lively, in the contrast of the lovely green with the dark blue sea, with the white crests of its mimic billows glittering in the sun; and serene, in the cloudless clear blue sky.

This, however, is equally applicable to any one of the thousands of pictures which present themselves on all sides in these waters, but of the one before us we must give a more particular description, for surely few places in the world are more deserving of it.

The whole length of the Strait is but about fifteen or sixteen miles, but the scenery is particularly beautiful throughout, and although it receives no assistance whatever from art, presents an appearance which, for richness, gaiety, and natural softness of beauty, can scarcely be surpassed.

Independently of the thickly wooded shores on either sides, and the lofty hills in the back ground, the strait itself is studded with a number of islands, the principal of which are Crockatoa, at the entrance, and "Thwart the way," so called from its position, immediately in the centre. Both these islands are a perfect mass of thick foliage, down to the very water; as, indeed, are all the other islands, the most remarkable of which are the Cap, and the Button, which are readily distinguished, from their peculiar shape, being nothing but little tumps of shrubbery, growing, as it were, out of the sea; they are not above a hundred yards in circumference, and about as high as they are wide.

On the Java side, about half way through the Strait, is the village of Anjier, the houses of which are but just perceptible through the thick grove which surrounds it, which, with the sun shining brightly upon its white cottages, forms no small addition to the beauty of the scene. The most conspicuous object is the house of the

resident governor, which, with its garden and white steps, is a perfect pattern of Dutch cleanliness and taste. The governor himself is a most hospitable man, and any stranger is sure of a hearty welcome at his house, and an invitation to dinner, with a quiet rubber at whist afterwards. His time appears to be principally occupied in smoking his pipe, the only variation to which employment consists in filling another. One reason for his being always glad to see strangers is, that he has then an opportunity of having a game at whist, of which he is excessively fond, and should the visitors be good players, he is perfectly happy. Not that we wish to be understood for a moment to detract from the old gentleman's hospitality, or ascribe it to any other source than pure philanthropy, for that would, we are sure, be doing him a great injustice, for we are perfectly certain, that any one would meet with an equally kind reception, whether they could render themselves agreeable to him, in this particular, or not; all that we mean to say is, that any one that

can thus indulge his partiality for this amusement, will have the satisfaction of finding that they are looked upon as conferring a kindness upon him, rather than receiving one at his hands, and, if they can derive any pleasure from seeing a kindly-disposed, good hearted old gentleman made perfectly happy by their means, they will have an excellent opportunity of doing so, at his house. Many people may fancy that the presence of utter strangers, must be an intrusion upon him, and others may, perhaps, think that if the commanders of every vessel that stops at Anjier, were to dine with him, the extra expence of providing for their entertainment, would make a serious difference in an income, which, considering the value of the situation, cannot be very great. So far from this, however, he only regrets that more people do not come to see him, for, although almost all the homeward-bounders from China touch here, to get water, (it being in their direct course) yet they scarcely ever stay more than a few hours, and it very seldom, indeed, occurs, that any one of them

remains more than a day, so that, although he may have a great number of visitors, still they are merely upon matters of business, and, notwithstanding that his house is always open for hospitality, the guests are, comparatively, few.

At a short distance from his house is the fort, which is much larger than would be expected, from the size of the village, and capable of holding a large body of troops, in case of need; there are, however, only a few soldiers and an old sergeant stationed there at present, under the command of a lieutenant, and a nice easy life they must have of it, for the whole and sole duty of this garrison appears to be to pull the Dutch flag to the top of a pole at sun-rise, and haul it down again at sun-set, which operation is performed "By the Company," with great ceremony, and attended with beat of drum.

The village itself has no particular object of interest, and is remarkable for nothing, but its general beauty; if, however, we except a magnificent tree, at the very summit of which, a small

house has been built, in which a man is, occasionally, stationed, to look out. To the northward of the village, and running for some distance parallel to the sea coast, is a road leading to Batavia, which, though its whole extent resembles rather an avenue through a gentleman's grounds, where every thing is systematically arranged, to please the eye, than a road cut through a wild wood. Here greens, of every shade, are "harmoniously confused," and interspersed with numerous wild flowers, which with their brilliant colours delight the eye, but unfortunately it is for the eye only that they are made, for the most beautiful in appearance are most obnoxious to the smell; and, in the same manner, those birds whose plumage is so far superior to the feathered inhabitants of a colder climate, are unable to produce a note of song, but only utter screams which make them sources of annoyance rather than pleasure.

At a short distance from the village, lies the disfigured hull of the poor old "Inglis," which was wrecked there about two years ago. None but a

sailor can fully enter into the feelings awakened by seeing an old well known ship "bleaching her bones" upon the strand; for none else can understand how it can be possible to conceive affection for an inanimate mass of wood and iron, but so it is, a regular thorough-bred sailor is attached to his ship, and let her be the dullest sailer possible, he will somehow or other contrive to find out some particular point or quality in which she excels, and that being once determined, no opportunity of asserting it is allowed to pass by. Should it, however, happen that no favourable point is to be found about her, still he will remain faithful to her, and declare that he likes the old tub because she is such a lucky ship. Nothing of this sort, however, was required in the case of the "Inglis," for a better and more comfortable ship never swam salt water. One of our officers had formerly belonged to her, in her palmy days, and we accordingly went to have a look at her with him. Her sides, which were formerly so nicely painted, and kept in such beautiful order, were now covered

with a leaden mildew, and not the slightest resemblance to what she had been could now be traced in her deckless gutted hull. All her masts, spars, and yards, were laying upon the beach, with the exception of such of the smaller ones as had been carried away by the natives, to be burnt for firewood, and this was all that remained of another of the noble old 1400 ton ships, which are now fast being numbered amongst the things that have been. Well might our friend, who was now surveying the wreck of what he had known in its pride, exclaim in the words of Hamlet, "Alas poor Inglis, I knew her well," and, following in the same train of thought as that aroused by the sight of Yorick's skull, think of "the gibes, the songs, the flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table in a roar."

This lament for the loss of a vessel, as if it had been a friend, may no doubt appear absurd, but you who cannot enter into the feeling, at least forgive the failing in those who do.

One of the most singular peculiarities of the

Javanese, is their custom of dying their teeth a perfectly jet black, which they consider a great ornament, and compare all those who prefer the natural colour to monkeys or dogs. There is no accounting for the caprices of taste, or the vagaries of fashion, but this curious fancy appears the more extraordinary to us, who prize whiteness in the teeth, from the fact that their mode of living is such, as would ensure what we should call a beautiful set, from the absence of fermented liquors, and the use of meat in any great quantities; their principal articles of food being almost entirely confined to vegetables, which are very abundant, consisting of pumpkins, yams, and sweet potatoes. The best of these is the yam, which when properly cooked, is fully equal if not superior to our potato; indeed at a time like the present, when so much national calamity is consequent upon the failure of the potato crops, the experiment of introducing the yam into this country appears to be at least worthy of a trial; and although it might not be found possible to transplant a native of the tropics

into so cold a climate with success at first, still by patience and perseverance, the difficulty might be overcome, and the nature of the root so hardened by degrees, that it should at last be added to our list of vegetables; and since there seems to exist some probability of the potato being eventually exterminated altogether, it is fitting that some means should be taken to provide a substitute for this most useful and general article of food. That this is not altogether so wild and visionary a scheme as it would appear, we have but to remind our readers, that we have a precedent before us, in the case of the potato itself, which was brought by Sir Walter Raleigh from a very much warmer climate than our own, and from the same latitude as part of China, where the yam is abundant. That its nature might be very much altered in the transportation is very possible, as we find that the potato, when taken into a hot climate, seldom attains to the same state of perfection that it does in this country, and is reduced to little more than half the size; supposing this to be the case with

the yam, it would still be a most valuable acquisition in case of the failure of the potato crop, as it is equally if not more nutritious, and easily cultivated.

To return from this digression to the productions of Java. The soil of this island is so fertile, that the sugar cane will grow here without the aid of manure, and indeed the thickness and luxuriance of the wood, with which the whole island is covered, is a sufficient proof, were others wanting, of its fertility. Rice, pepper, sugar, and coffee, are all produced here in great perfection, and in large quantities, whilst many other articles, amongst which may be numbered cotton and indigo, are grown, although not to a very great extent. Fruit, of all descriptions, is exceedingly plentiful, and the various sorts almost too numerous to mention. In addition to the usual eastern fruits, such as pine apples, pomeloes, mangoes, guavas, &c. all which are particularly fine, and so abundant that a pine apple is sold for the low price of one halfpenny, Java has also a fruit which is

almost peculiar to itself, or at least to that part of the world, namely the mangosteen, for it is rarely found even in the warmest latitudes, to the northward of the line. It is generally accounted the most delicious fruit in the world, but owing to their expectations having been raised too high, most strangers are disappointed on tasting it for the first time, as indeed we were ourselves, for having constantly heard so much about it, we were at last induced to imagine it to be something very wonderful. It is certainly very delicious, but after all very much inferior to some of our own fruits, the strawberry for instance, which, in our humble opinion, is the finest of all the productions of this or any other country. The mangosteen is about the size of a small orange, and has very much the same appearance as a pomegranate, but the rind is very much thicker, being sometimes as much as a quarter of an inch across; this being cut through longitudinally, without touching the inside, and then the upper part lifted off, gives a most beautiful appearance to the fruit, which is a perfect milk

white, and forms a pleasing contrast with the dark red of the rind which surrounds it; it is divided into five unequal compartments, like an orange, and in the centre of each of these is a large seed; the pulp that covers these seeds is the only part which is eaten, and has a very delicate flavour, which is totally different from any other fruit, and perhaps nearer resembles a thick whipped cream than any thing else. Several attempts have been made to bring them home, but seldom, if ever, we believe, with success. We also attempted, and are sorry to say also failed, although we tried various plans; some we put into a jar and carefully excluded the air, others we rolled in paper, and some more were dipped in pitch; but all our schemes were alike ineffectual, for upon looking at them we found the outsides were perfect, and to all appearance quite sound, but the fruit itself had vanished. The next best fruit is decidedly the pomelo, which is the same as what in the West Indies is called the shaddock. Another remarkable sort, which is peculiar to the tropical climates, is the custard

apple, which consists of a number of seeds, very much resembling small black beans, piled up in the form of a pine apple cheese, and covered with a coating to keep them together; round each of these seeds there is a pulpy substance exactly resembling custard, in both taste and appearance, from whence the name is derived: in fact a very fair imitation of the fruit might be made by placing a number of beans in a mould, shaped as aforesaid, and then filling up the interstices with a very thick custard.

It is generally believed that any thing which is produced by unnatural means, such as in a hot-house, &c. must be very far inferior to the same fruit or vegetable when grown without the assistance of art, and that therefore a pine apple in India, must be vastly superior to one grown with so much trouble and expense in England; this, however, is not so, for there is a great difference between them certainly, but the advantage is upon the side of the English one in point of flavour; and for this reason, that, although the real native

may get on best during the day, when it has the advantage of a powerful sun, yet it receives a check at night from the heavy dews, which its artificial rival in the hot-house does not feel. It is however pleasant and novel to the stranger just fresh from England, where he has been accustomed to look upon a pine apple as a treat for grand occasions, to be able to walk through fields, and pick one as he would a turnip, perhaps taking a single slice out of the very best part, and throwing away the rest, of one which at home would be worth a pound or two. So little are they valued here, that they are used for cleaning any iron work which has become very much corroded with rust, as they contain a most powerful acid, which acts upon the steel in such a manner, that it is a common practice with the Malays, to steep their creeses in the juice, which then becomes a most deadly poison, rendering death inevitably consequent upon a wound.

The existence of the Upas tree, concerning which such Baron Munchausen-like fictions have

been, very generally, believed, has been proved to be perfectly fabulous, so far, at least, as regards its powers of destroying all animal, as well as vegetable life, within ten miles, by means of an effluvia emitted from it; that a poisonous tree exists, however, is perfectly true, but its power is confined to its juice, which is not only fatal in its consequences, if taken internally, but, will even produce swellings and illness, in those who are employed to collect it, unless great care be taken in doing so, to protect their bodies from contact with it.

There are few places in the world, upon which the choicest gifts of nature have been so abundantly bestowed, as the island of Java; for, throughout its entire length, it presents the appearance of a rich and beautiful garden. Here, as in all other parts of the East, the palm and cocoa nut trees, form a considerable part of every wood, and may be seen in all directions; but there are, also, the shrubs of the nutmeg, clove, and cinnamon, which impart a fragrance to the surrounding air.

The nutmeg is a very precise, and formal looking plant, for its stem is perfectly straight, and its branches regular, the bark is smooth, and brown, and the leaves large and oval, with the outer surface green, and the inner one brown. The fruit is about the size of a small apple, but it is only the kernel which is valuable; the outer shell, when preserved, is very agreeable, but otherwise of no use. What is known by the name of mace, is a fibrous coating, which surrounds the kernel, and separates it from the shell.

We are, however, wandering far away from Anjier, to which we must now return. The Button, one of the small islands before mentioned, contains two caverns, in which are found the edible birds' nests, which are considered such articles of delicacy by the Chinese epicures. They belong to a very small species of swallow, and are composed of a gelatinous substance, which causes them to adhere together in rows, and renders them so valuable for making soups for the *bonvivants*, who purchase them. There are great numbers of them

found in the caverns, at the foot of the high mountains in the interior, and the Javanese derive considerable profit from the sale of them.

Leaving Anjier, and having passed through the remainder of the Strait, we came to a cluster of islands, which, from their numbers, have been called, the thousand islands. The day was beautifully fine, and the breeze just sufficient to keep us moving, at a moderate pace, as we passed through them. These islands are all composed of coral rocks, the vegetation being caused by the washing of various articles upon them, which accumulate, from time to time, and have, at length, produced as picturesque a group, as a painter's eye would wish. Seen, as it was, under such advantages, with the clear blue sky above, and the smooth water below, the entrance to Batavia, had some thing absolutely fascinating in its appearance, possessing, also, this advantage over the generality of scenes, that the objects which constituted its beauty, were perpetually changing their positions with relation to one another, as we advanced upon

our course, and the combinations which were thus being made, served only to present fresh cause for admiration; for passing, as we did, quite close to several of them, the changes were more rapid, and more effective, than they would have been, had the objects been more remote. In fact, the whole distance from Anjier to Batavia, seemed to be nothing more than a pleasure trip, and, indeed, many might be taken for that purpose alone, without the same gratification being experienced.

In addition to the islands, which are already above the surface of the water, there are many others in the course of formation, which are still below it, but have attained a sufficient height to be very dangerous to shipping; upon many of these, beacons have been placed, which serve to point out the safest entrance into the harbour. Considerable alterations are taking place in the position of the land about Batavia, for new islands are formed by the continual accumulation of coral, which, eventually, rises above the level of the water; whilst, on the other hand, some of the pre-existing ones

have disappeared, probably by the convulsions of some subaqueous volcano; for, that these islands are of a volcanic origin, has been clearly proved by Mr. Lyell, who says "The circular or oval forms "of the numerous coral islands of the Pacific, with "the lagoons in the centre, naturally suggests the "idea that they are nothing more than the crests "of submarine volcanoes, having the rims and "bottoms of their craters overgrown by corals. "This opinion is strengthened by the conical form "of the submarine mountain, and the steep angle "at which it plunges into the surrounding ocean. "It is also well known that the Pacific, is the great "theatre of volcanic action, and every island yet "examined in the wide region termed Eastern "Oceanica, consists either of volcanic rocks, or "coral limestone." The formation of one of these islands must be particularly interesting to the geologist, and, indeed, to any one who will read the account given of them in Lyell's Geology. A slight sketch of them may not, however, be amiss, for the benefit of those who have not the opportunity

of availing themselves of fuller information upon the subject. The coral reefs are formed by various species of zoophites, which are constantly adding to the mass, until they have raised it above the level of the water, at which point they cease building. The heat of the sun then acting upon the stone when dry, splits it in many places, and the sea continually beating against it, throws up the pieces so detached, and thus raises the mass still higher. The trunks and branches of trees, together with particles of weeds and various other substances, are then washed up, and together with the sand of the coral, form a soil in which the seeds contained in the matter so collected, take root, and after a short time clothe the surface with vegetation. Birds then begin to resort to it, and bringing with them other seeds, trees at length appear, and in the course of a few years the reef assumes the form of a wooded island; and then, says Kotzebue, " at a much later period, when the " work has been long since completed, man also " appears, builds his hut on the fruitful soil, formed

" by the corruption of the leaves of trees, and calls himself lord and proprietor of this new creation."

Batavia roads are capable of affording safe anchorage to any number of vessels that are likely to come there, and are protected from any heavy swell by the cluster of islands before mentioned, which form a half circle, and act as a natural breakwater. There is, however, very little danger to be apprehended from bad weather here, as it is situated outside the limits prescribed by nature for violent storms of long duration, which are never known to occur within ten degrees of the line, on either side, and seldom within fourteen. This is very possibly accounted for, by the frequency of squalls, which, by creating a continual commotion in the air, prevent the great rarefaction of the atmosphere which produces storms. These squalls, although very violent, are generally not of sufficiently long duration to be dangerous to vessels lying in harbour, but are particularly so to those under sail, in many of the intricate channels with which these seas abound; for it repeatedly occurs that they come

on at the very moment when a steady breeze and clear weather are most required, in order to avoid dangers on both sides; the passages between the islands being very often not more than a quarter of a mile across.

The trade of Batavia is considerable, but principally confined to the Dutch, for although a number of English vessels may generally be seen in the roads, very few of them are either loading or discharging cargo, but have principally touched for water. Here too may be seen a few of the awkward, unwieldy-looking, Chinese junks, which seem as if a tolerable sized wave would completely destroy them, from the peculiar construction of their sterns, which are open. So little are they adapted to long voyages, that it appears only a matter of wonder to us how they can even get so far as Batavia. One or two of them were once imprudent enough to endeavour to reach England, but, as might be expected, were lost in the attempt, and only one we believe ever rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

The town of Batavia is regular and well built, and the different avenues to it are defended by forts; it is surrounded by a thick wall, and has six gates, after the manner of a European town, which it very much resembles. The shops are very much better than would be expected, and the streets tolerably wide; carriages stand for hire at the landing place, and other principal points, and in fact it differs very little from any of our own provincial towns, or rather, we should say, any of those in Holland, for the main streets are intersected by canals, the stagnant water of which is very unhealthy. The greatest peculiarity of Batavia, is the extraordinary collection of people that form its inhabitants, for in addition to the English, Dutch, French, and other European nations, who are established here for the sake of trade, there are also a great number of Chinese, and Indians of all descriptions, Javanese, Malays, and natives of all the neighbouring islands, The Chinese occupy a great portion of the town, and are a very useful part of the community, inasmuch as they are not

only hardworking, but very ingenious; they are also preferred by merchants to fill the various subordinate offices of clerks, &c. Batavia has always been a great point for the emigration of the Chinese, and in the year 1740 they formed a sufficient body to attempt to take possession of the town, they were however repulsed, and a few days afterwards the greater part of them were massacred, by order of the Dutch government. When the Emperor of China heard of it, instead of being enraged at this treatment of his subjects, he very coolly replied, "that he was little solicitous for the "fate of unworthy subjects, who, in pursuit of "lucre, had quitted their country, and abandoned "the tombs of their ancestors."

The principal drawback to Batavia is, its unhealthiness, owing to the quantity of stagnant water about it, which, in so hot a climate, throws off a miasma particularly injurious, so much so, indeed, that few strangers can remain long without being attacked with fever, which frequently carries off its victims in a very short time. In fact, it is

supposed that, of the total number of Europeans, including all classes, not more than two thirds live through the first year. Such, however, as are not, from the nature of their duties, obliged to be out in the middle of the day, may escape with, comparatively, little illness, while others must fall victims to it.

In addition to the numerous canals, and the quantity of water which is always found in every Dutch town, they have, here, also the benefit of a large swamp, which is covered by the sea at high water, and, when the tide recedes, it leaves behind it a slime, which, when acted upon by the almost perpendicular rays of the sun, is, not only sufficient to create a pestilence, but is particularly obnoxious to the smell. Were it not for this great evil, which nothing can counterbalance, Batavia is, really, a beautiful place, and could health but be preserved in it, would be one of the most agreeable residences in the world.

The year is divided into two seasons, the wet, and the dry, as in India, but with this difference,

that the changes do not occur at the same time, and, being in opposite hemispheres, the finest part of the year in India, is the worst in Java, and *vice versâ*. The dry monsoon commences in March, and ends in October, or November, when the fine weather is just beginning on the opposite side of the Equator, and the wet, westerly, monsoon, continues during the other months, which, were it not for the quantity of rain which falls at that time, and cools the air, would be intolerable, from the excessive heat, the sun being, at that time, vertical. The thermometer, during the dry season, ranges from 80° to 90° during the hottest part of the day, falling to about 75° as its lowest point; it is, occasionally, found to rise very much higher than 90°, and even above 100°, but this is very unusual.

We must not leave Batavia, without taking notice of the native boats, which always flock round a ship, the moment she has taken up her position in the harbour, bringing articles of every description in order to tempt strangers to purchase some few

things of them, before they go on shore, where they will, in all probability, find the same articles cheaper, and, at the same time, better; this custom is not, however, confined to this place, but, is prevalent all over the world, in every harbour that a vessel enters, but here, and Anjier, are almost the only places where any thing really worth having, is brought off from the shore; it is, generally, nothing but the refuse of the markets, which has been bought at a cheap rate, that is exposed for sale in these boats, but here, there are many articles really worth having; amongst which may be numbered, Malacca canes, and various descriptions of most beautiful birds, two or three of which we bought, but were unable to keep, for any length of time, for, coming from so completely tropical a climate, they are excessively tender, and require so much care in colder weather, that they, generally, die in the course of a very few weeks. We succeeded, however, in picking out a dozen or two very tolerable canes, which are sold here for a mere song; but a really good one is

exceedingly difficult to get: and it was not until after sending backwards and forwards to the shore a great many times, and making the boatmen bring an enormous quantity, from which to make our selection, that we could find any that suited us: they are, generally, so short between the joints, that they are of no use whatever, or else, if sufficiently long, the colour is bad, or the size objectionable. We also made a rather extensive purchase of preserved nutmeg, which is, in our opinion, the best of all these eastern sweetmeats; for the others are too sweet; but the flavour of the spice takes off the sickliness, and is yet not sufficiently strong to be unpleasant. It is the outer shell only which is eaten, when preserved, and not the kernel, or, what we call nutmeg, as that still retains its powerful flavour, which would be disagreeable; it is, however, left in, with the mace round it, for the sake of appearances, and forms a very pretty preserve for the dessert table.

Leaving Batavia, with its swamps and fevers, from the neighbourhood of which we were glad

to escape without any ill effects, we once more passed through a portion of the same cluster of islands, and emerged into the Java sea. Owing to the north east monsoon being now blowing, we were unable to proceed direct to China, through the Straits of Gaspar, and then across the China sea, for the wind being in the very quarter towards which our course lay, our progress must have been very slow, from being obliged to be constantly tacking. In the earlier stages of the trade to these parts, it was customary for ships to arrive here only at such times as would ensure them a fair wind, or if it so happened that the time was miscalculated, or any accidental delay lost them the proper opportunity, they used to remain very quietly at anchor until the season came round again. A detention of a month is, however, not to be heard of now, for any reason whatever, much less for so trifling a cause as a foul wind; but it has been found more advisable to perform a circuitous route of twice the distance, than to attempt the direct course by tacking. Ships,

therefore, arriving at this season, take what is called the eastern passage, which means running so far to the eastward, as to enable them to avail themselves of the N.E. monsoon, in order to do which, they are obliged to sail in an almost direct east line, until they reach the 125th degree of longitude, at which point they turn to the northward, and come into the Pacific ocean, when they are still obliged to keep to the eastward, until a line drawn at right angles with the direction of the wind, will clear Cape Engano, which is the north eastern point of the Philippine Islands. This will depend upon the wind, for, although it is called the N.E. monsoon, it merely derives its name from being generally between the points N. and E.; at the latter part of the season, however, it draws even to the southward of east, and is then favourable to all vessels proceeding northward, in which case they would not require to get further to the eastward, than the point at which they enter the Pacific. The eastern passage, usually taken, will be easily followed upon a map

by taking these points. From Batavia, due east to Bouton, at which point turn northward to Bouro, thence to Oubi, Geby, and Gillolo, where enter the Pacific ocean. The course then depends upon the wind; but the next point to be arrived at, is Cape Engano, then pass between the Babuan and Bashee islands, and then straight to whatever the port may be in China. This seems a very circuitous route, but is, nevertheless, performed in less time than across the China sea (during the adverse monsoon), owing to the prevalence of the westerly wind, in the Java sea, which enables the vessel to accomplish the easting in a very short time, and the distance then is about the same from both points. There is also another important consideration, especially in the mind of the shipowner, which renders the eastern passage preferable to the more direct course, and that is, the wear and tear of ropes, &c., which are consequent upon the incessant tacking; which, considering the enormous expense of rigging a ship, must make a considerable difference in the amount of the

profits, which, in these hard times, and with low freights, is certainly worthy of being taken into the account.

CHAPTER IX.

EASTERN PASSAGE. — A WATER SPOUT. — LUMINOUSNESS OF THE SEA. — ITS PROBABLE CAUSE. — SQUALL. — STRAITS OF SALAYA. — BOUTON. — PIRATES. — CALM. — GILLOLO PASSAGE.

> The guns were primed, the vessel northward veers,
> Till her black battery on the column bears,
> The nitre fired ——————————
> The wat'ry volume trembling to the sky
> Burst down in dreadful deluge from on high.
>
> *Falconer.*

DURING the whole of the time occupied in performing that part of the eastern passage which lays between the Straits of Sunda, and the entrance to the Pacific, at the island of Gillolo, the land is scarcely ever out of sight, for as soon as one island has disappeared astern, another is seen rising ahead, and thus fresh objects of interest present themselves every day. But, in addition to the mere beauties that are thus continually succeeding

one another, there is, perhaps, no other part of the world in which so many of the wonderful phenomena of nature may be witnessed. An opportunity of beholding one of the most extraordinary of them, namely, the water spout, was afforded us on the second day after leaving Batavia. When first seen, it presented the appearance of a fine black line drawn upon the sky, not perfectly straight, but irregular, with a slight curve about the centre; this gradually increased, until it at last assumed the form of a large column, having the top broader than the other part; when in this state, it seemed like a pillar supporting a cloud, which increased in density, in proportion to the duration of the spout. After continuing thus for about three or four minutes, it again wasted gradually away, and finally disappeared. The quantity of water which is thus borne upwards must be immense, for the weight of that which is contained in the column is said to be sufficient to break a ship's deck, if it should fall upon it; whether this be so, or not, we cannot pretend to

say, but, if we may judge from the size of the spout, the immense force with which it appears to be rushing up, and the extent of the rain cloud formed by it, there would seem to be fully sufficient to render the consequences of its fall dangerous, if not to the full extent before mentioned. It is generally believed by seamen, that a shot fired through the centre, has the effect of causing them to disperse, and thus prevent any accident occurring from their too near approach; which proceeding is described at full length by Falconer, in the Shipwreck, from which we have selected the quotation at the head of this chapter. With regard to the cause of these, many and various opinions have been entertained, some referring it to electrical, and some to volcanic action. Buffon observes, "To me it appears, that "if there be in particular places, at the bottom "of the sea, a mixture of sulphur, bitumen, and "mineral substances, these may, occasionally, be "inflamed, which will produce, like the explosion "of gunpowder, a great quantity of air; and this

"air, newly generated, and rarified to a prodigious "degree, mounts with rapidity, and may elevate "the water from the sea to the clouds." Much more, however, requires to be known, before the cause and nature of water spouts can be satisfactorily explained. Whilst upon this subject, we may also mention another phenomenon, which is not less remarkable, and which, like the former one, has not been accounted for with any degree of certainty; we allude to the luminousness of the sea, concerning which numerous suggestions have been made, all which, however, may be classed under two heads, the first of which would attribute it to a collection of animalculæ, or the spawn of fish; whilst the other supposes it to proceed from putrefaction of animal substances, between which two opinions the matter rests at present undecided. Speaking from our own experience, not arrogantly, but with all humility, we would be rather inclined to give the preference to the putrefaction, as being the more probable cause; and for this reason, that this brilliancy in the

water is never seen to such perfection as immediately under the stern of the vessel, especially when going fast, which would be the case, if we suppose the light to proceed from the phosporescent particles engendered by putrefaction, upon which the agitation of the water, and the friction produced by the rapid motion of the vessel, would have the same effect as may be seen by writing upon a wall, in a dark room, with a lucifer match, and afterwards rubbing the letters with the hand, which occasions them to flash with greater brilliancy; why may we not suppose that the putrified particles, with which it is well known that the sea abounds, are acted upon in the same manner, and that although they are laying dull upon the surface of the water, that its agitation has the effect of causing their brilliancy. On the other hand, if we suppose the light to be emitted by animalculæ, why should not the whole surface of the water be equally luminous, or rather, why should the wake of the ship be always the most brilliantly illuminated, as is the case.

Another argument in favour of the putrefaction, is, that this luminousness is frequently affected by the state of the weather, and it has been repeatedly observed, that a very hard squall is usually preceded by a milky appearance in the water, not merely bright flashes of light, as at other times, but a general milky colour extending for some distance from the ship. This we witnessed upon one occasion, and being struck with the extraordinary appearance, called the attention of one of the officers to the fact. Although there was not, at that time, the smallest particle of a cloud visible, he informed us, that we were sure to have a very heavy squall before many hours were over. Being rather curious to know whether such would be the case, we determined to remain on deck, and watch the event. Over the surface of the water there appeared now to be forming a thick, whitish, mist, which caused the horizon to appear so much contracted, as to be brought within a a very few yards of the ship; but beyond this, there were no indications of any change being

about to take place; the stars were beautifully bright, and the breeze just sufficient to keep us moving. After about two hours expectation, it appeared that something was about to happen, for the mist began to clear away, and the dull chalky appearance of the water was now enlivened by myriads of little brilliant sparks. Presently, a few small clouds began to rise, which passed over without any effect, but upon keeping our eyes fixed upon that quarter of the sky from which they rose, the horizon appeared to be considerably higher than at any other point; this afterwards was found to be owing to a bank of cloud, which was so dense as to be hardly distinguishable from the water. This gradually increased; until, at last, it assumed the form of a thick wall, and appeared to be quite close to us. Knowing, from experience, that this was a certain indication of a hard squall, the officer of the watch instantly gave orders for the necessary reduction of sail, taking in all the lighter ones, and leaving only the topsails to receive the shock. Presently, the water

appeared darkening, and, shortly afterwards, the vessel began to feel the effects of the wind, and yielded slightly to it; the cracking of the cordage announced its increase, and, at the next moment, we were laid upon our beam ends, and the top-sails obliged to be let fly. A hard squall appears much more violent than a gale which increases gradually, on account of the suddenness of the former, and should the officer of the watch not calculate its strength well, and allow himself to be caught with too much sail set, the consequences may be serious. As soon as the squall, which lasted about ten minutes, had passed over, the water was perfectly clear, and free from the chalky appearance which had previously existed, in place of which large flakes of most brilliant light were constantly passing, which would tend to show, that, the substances producing it were phosphorescent particles resulting from putrefaction, to which the unusual agitation, produced by the squall, had imparted an excess of brilliancy.

At the distance of about eight hundred and

fifty miles from Batavia, are the Straits of Salaya, through which we passed on the sixth day, having thus run upon an average 140 miles a day, which, considering the nature of these low latitudes, so subject to calms and squalls, was as much as we could expect. This passage, which hardly deserves the name of a Strait, is exceedingly narrow, and so dangerous from a number of rocks and small islands which obstruct it, that we were afraid of not being able to get through before dark; luckily, however, a breeze sprang up and rattled us through at the rate of nine knots an hour. Its appearance is peculiar, from the abrupt termination of the land on each side, which, instead of sloping down to the beach, and being covered with wood, ends with a perpendicular rock, which seems to suggest that the lesser island, Salaya, had formerly been connected with Celebes opposite, but that, by some convulsion of nature, they had been suddenly separated, and removed to the distance which they now are apart.

From this point another day's run brought us

to Bouton Island, where an incident occurred which occasioned a slight alarm. Passing round the southern point of the island during the night, we were becalmed, and drifted by the current close in shore, this however did not excite much apprehension, as we had our anchor ready to be let go at a moment's warning, should we drive so near that our position would become dangerous; but the cause of our uneasiness was the appearance of a large boat, pulled by a great number of oars, which was approaching us. Visions of pirates, and reminiscences of a few of the most cruel and blood-thirsty of their actions, crowded upon our imaginations, and, in order to afford us as much consolation as possible, some one commenced telling a story of some vessel, that he knew, having been taken by the Malays, and the greater part of the crew put to death. The apprehensions which had been thus excited, were by no means allayed by the appearance of another boat, which was presently afterwards discovered pulling across our stern; for although we did not entertain any doubt

whatever of our being able to beat these off should they venture to attack us, still we were by no means satisfied that there were not a number of others at present concealed by the darkness, who, in the event of an attack, would instantly surround the vessel and overpower us with sheer numbers; and added to this, part of our own crew were Malays, who would most probably turn against us. In the midst of all these doubts and fears, a breeze sprang up, which very soon put an end to all our imaginary cutting of throats, walking the plank, &c. by placing us far beyond the reach of these terrible pirates, who were, in all probability, nothing more than quiet inoffensive fishermen going out for the night, and perhaps attracted by the appearance of so large a ship close to the land, induced to stop for a few minutes to look at her. That they were such, however, could not possibly be admitted in the neighbourhood of Borneo, the stronghold of Malay pirates, of whose atrocities we had heard so much, and consequently every boat that is seen here must instantly be converted into a proa filled

with armed and blood-thirsty savages. There can, however, be no doubt that these seas are infested by pirates, for ships of war have been repeatedly sent down by government to disperse them, but that vessels are constantly attacked, and the crews murdered, is entirely a romance. Should it however happen, that any misfortune befalls a ship, such as running on shore, or becoming otherwise disabled, the Malays will then avail themselves of the opportunity of plundering, and if resistance be offered, will not hesitate to murder the crew, rather than be balked of their expected booty.

The distance from Bouton to Booro, although very short, nevertheless occupied us three days, owing to a succession of calms and light variable airs, which, after remaining favourable for an hour or two, shifted to the immediately opposite quarter, and then, after a short interval, to some other point, thus blowing from almost every point of the compass in the course of the twenty-four hours. No sooner were the sails trimmed in one direction, than they had to be altered, this endless work

being occasionally varied by a calm. Our progress was consequently excessively tedious; and to add to our misfortunes, we were thus detained in almost the only part of the whole passage in which there was nothing to be seen, for; although both Bouton and Booro are beautiful in themselves, yet we were so happily situated between both, that we could see neither, farther than distinguishing the outline of the one, and the dark blue hill of the other, which, towering aloft, was occasionally hidden from our view, by the wreaths of clouds which hung upon its summit.

Having nothing whatever to engross our attention, we were naturally upon the look out for every thing and any thing, that was worthy of remark; for which however we were sadly at a loss. The dull glassy surface of the water, was uninteresting; the perfect stillness of the ship, annoying; and the distant view of the surrounding islands, day after day, by no means pleasant; in fact we did not feel inclined to note any circumstances connected with so unpleasant a time, for

the heat was terrific, and the light airs, which came at intervals, seemed but a mockery, raising hopes which were only to be destroyed at the next moment. A breeze at length set in, which was particularly grateful, as it wafted us rapidly past Booro, (to which we had taken an inveterate dislike, from having had it constantly before our eyes for the three previous days,) and did not fail us until we arrived at Geby Island, when it decreased considerably, and thus afforded us an opportunity of fully examining the beauties of this lovely spot. After another delay of a few hours, which we did not now regret, it again sprung up and never afterwards left us.

On arriving at the northern extremity of the Gillolo passage, our course lay through a cluster of small islands which somewhat resembled bee-hives in shape, and were densely covered with wood of the most lovely green, which formed a most pleasing contrast to the white foam of the waves which dashed against their bases. The sea was sufficiently ruffled by the breeze to raise small

billows, whose glittering crests of foam shone brightly in the sun, and produced that appearance which has been so beautifully termed by Æschylus the πόντιων κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, an expression perfectly untranslateable without great circumlocution, and which, to be fully appreciated, requires that the reader should have seen the original described, without which he will be at a loss to understand the meaning of a "smiling" wave.

This having been passed, we emerged into the Pacific Ocean, and the remainder of the voyage being across the open sea, the peculiarities of the navigation amongst the multitude of islands in the Eastern Passage terminates at this point.

CHAPTER X.

CHINA. — APPROACH TO IT. — PILOTS. — HONG KONG. — POLICY OF TAKING IT. — MACAO. — ITS APPEARANCE FROM THE SEA COMPARED WITH ITS REAL STATE. — TEMPLE. — CAMOEN'S CAVE. — THE BOGUE. — PASSAGE TO WHAMPOA. — RICE CULTIVATION. — ABSENCE OF PASTURE GROUND. — CLIMATE. — CAUSE OF EXCESS OF HEAT AND COLD. — PAGODA HILL. — BOAT POPULATION. — CHINESE TEMPLE.

> From Ainam bay begins the ancient reign
> Of China's beauteous art adorned domain,
> Wide, from the burning to the frozen skies,
> O'erflowed with wealth, the potent empire lies.
>
> *Mickle's Translation of the Lusiad.*

THE first indication of the vicinity of the Celestial Empire, is the appearance of a number of fishing boats, all exactly resembling one another in every particular but size, which gradually decreases, in proportion to the distance from the land; the larger ones being better able to encounter any change in the weather, which might prevent their immediate return, venture much farther out to sea

than the smaller ones, which seldom lose sight of the land. Many of these were at a distance of more than a hundred miles from the nearest point, for it was not until some hours after passing the first fleet of them, that we made the land. The first that presented itself, was the double peaked hill, which, from its peculiar formation, has been termed, the Asses Ears, which it slightly resembles. Upon a nearer approach, we perceived a small boat evidently making for us, and, with the assistance of our glasses, we could see a man standing up in her, and waving a small red flag. Having placed his boat in such a position that we must pass very close to him, he very quietly lowered his sail, and waited for our approach; as we were now sailing at the rate of six knots an hour, he had not long to remain idle, for in the course of about twenty minutes, we were within a hundred yards of him, and then, watching his opportunity, and calculating his distance to a nicety, his sail was again hoisted, and, at the next minute, the boat shot alongside, hooked on to the ship, and, in a

very few seconds afterwards, its principal occupant, who was a pilot, was on board, without our having had the trouble of stopping, or even slackening the speed of the vessel, in order to pick him up. So admirably do these men manage their boats, that it very seldom indeed occurs that they miss a vessel, let her be going ever so fast. Their first care, upon coming on board, is to enquire, of the first person they see, what the captain's name is, and what ship he commanded before, which information having been obtained, they then go up to the captain, and, pretending to recollect a well-known face, address him with, "Ah captain Smith, how you do, I 'member you last voyage." In order to test the accuracy of this assertion, the captain will, probably reply, "Do you, what ship was I in." For this the Chinaman is prepared, and immediately answers correctly.

The rate of pilotage, not being determined by fixed regulation, as in England, it is a matter of agreement between the parties themselves; which, having been settled, the pilot proceeds to take

charge of the ship, the first step towards doing which, consists in establishing his pipe and his tea pot upon the sky light, or some other convenient place upon the poop, from whence he may be able to watch the proceedings of the vessel, and, at the same time, not be deprived of his tea, and tobacco, both of which are his inseparable companions. Any regulations which may exist, with regard to smoking in particular parts of vessel, are, generally, waived in the case of the pilots, on account of their being such jolly good humoured fellows; and they are, accordingly, allowed this privilege, by all commanders who are not so filled with ideas of their own importance, as to imagine themselves to be somebodies; and, that by enforcing a number of absurd rules, which they are pleased to call discipline, they can convert themselves, and their ships, into any thing but what they really are. Such men may walk their poops with what airs they will, and not permit such an infringement of their would-be discipline, as to allow a pilot to make so free; but the lion's skin,

though it covers the body, cannot conceal the *nature* of the ass, and all their absurdities will not add one jot to the importance which they wish to assume. Much better then is it for them to allow this little irregularity, which cannot, in any way, affect the order of the ship, and will amply repay them, in the amusement to be derived from the society of a merry, good tempered, laughing fellow, though he be but a pilot. The peculiar characteristic of the one which we had employed, was a certain pompous gravity, with which he issued all his orders. Instead of being at the trouble, or rather, perhaps, we should say condescending, to superintend the various evolutions of "working ship," he merely sat upon the skylight, smoking "the calumet of peace," and, whenever the occasion required, intimated to the officer of the deck that he should "make ship go about." These pilots are exceedingly able men, and the manner in which they handle large ships in narrow places, is really astonishing, when we consider the great difference which exists between their own

native vessels, with their single sails, and our multiplicity of yards, and apparently intricate combination of ropes. The wind, being dead ahead, rendered the approach to Hong Kong particularly tedious, owing to the narrowness of the passage which leads to it, which obliged us to beat the whole distance. This process was rendered the more tiresome from the shortness of the tacks, which were made at very short intervals, and with very little effect, owing to the loss occasioned at the turning, or, as it is technically called, "in stays," on account of the tide, which had not quite ceased ebbing. During the whole of two nights, and one day, were we thus kept knocking about, actually in sight of the point we were endeavouring to reach, alternately making some progress with the flood tide, and obliged to anchor, during the ebb, in order to maintain the advantage we had gained. On the morning of the second day, we rounded the last point, and, to our great joy, cast anchor in the bay of Hong Kong, or Victoria Town, as it is the fashion to call it.

This harbour affords a safe anchorage to any number of vessels, and at all seasons of the year, for it is entirely surrounded by lofty hills on all sides, leaving only the narrow entrance to the westward. This position is, however, disadvantageous to the town, for being so completely sheltered from the wind, the heat is intolerable, and much of the disease which has made such havoc amongst our troops, and which occasioned the Chinese to give it the name of the Valley of Death, may be ascribed to this cause.

The town itself consists of only one street, which runs parallel to the sea shore, with little alleys diverging from it at two or three points. About the centre of the town are the houses of the principal merchants, who have lately established their head quarters here, instead of at Macao, where they used formerly to reside. At the eastern extremity of the road are the barracks, a few merchants' houses, and a small bazaar; whilst the west end is confined wholly to shops and markets. There is a middling hotel, at which the

accommodation is bad and the prices exorbitant. Considering the short time that it has been in our possession, Hong Kong presents a very tolerable appearance from the sea, for it contains many very handsome and well-built houses, belonging to the European part of the population, whilst, at the same time, the shops of the natives are good, well filled, and numerous.

The stranger who upon his arrival here imagines that he is going to see any thing of Chinese habits, or that he will be able to form any idea of the country, will be grievously disappointed, for there is nothing whatever peculiar to China in the whole place, if we except the people, the contents of the shops, (not the shops themselves, for *they* are perfectly English,) and that peculiar smell which pervades not only every thing in China, but also all that comes from there, in a slight degree, and even the very air itself is impregnated with it. With the exception of these three, there is no other cause which would at all denote the country he was in, for, walking down the street in the day

time, he will see English stone-built houses on either side, occasionally interspersed with shops precisely similar to those at home, the chemist's window presenting the same display of gaudy coloured bottles, and the names of the various tradesmen surmounting their doors; beyond he sees the hotel, with two or three loungers in the verandah, all of whom are English, or at any rate Europeans; and, to more completely Anglicise the scene, groups of naval and military officers are constantly passing to and fro. In fact Hong Kong is not China; nothing about it is Chinese; and a stranger visiting Hong Kong only, would have no more idea of the manners, customs, and appearance of the country, than if he had never stirred out of England. It is literally nothing more than an English depôt, and may be looked upon as an English town to which a great number of Chinese tradesmen have been attracted by the hopes of gain.

With regard to the policy of our taking possession of so unhealthy a place, and one which at first

sight would appear to be not worth the keeping, there is little doubt, notwithstanding all that has been said about it. As to its insalubrity, too many of our brave fellows have been carried off, to admit of the fact being disputed, but there still remains this question to be answered, Would not any other part of a country, in which fever and ague are so prevalent, have been equally fatal to men who had lately arrived from so totally different a climate? This chief cause of complaint is, however, now in a great measure, if not entirely, removed by the improvements which have been made within this last year or two, and as good health may now be enjoyed at Hong Kong, as in any other part of China. As a proof of the alteration which has taken place in its state since it has fallen into our possession, no stronger argument can be adduced, than that it is now the head quarters of our principal merchants, who have removed here *with their wives and families*, which we should hardly suppose they would do, if it still deserved the ominous name of the Valley of Death.

The cause from which this originated has however now passed away, and the attention of the inhabitants having been turned, in self defence, to devising the best means of rendering the town healthy, it is to be hoped that, at the end of the next ten years, the bills of mortality will be able to present a tolerably low average.

The next consideration is the use of such a place, which, as those who condemn the policy of taking it maintain, is nothing more than a barren rock, and exceedingly difficult to get at. In reply to this, we would first suggest that its unproductiveness is a matter of no importance whatever, inasmuch as we are not dependant upon its fertility for resources; whilst, on the other hand, its insular position renders it particularly valuable to us, as it prevents the possibility of a surprise, which any position upon the main land must be subject to; and moreover our great strength and superiority over other nations being in our navy, it is consequently a great point that any place of which we may be in possession, should be attackable from

the sea only. The difficulty of reaching it during the N.E. monsoon, is certainly objectionable, as we had found to our cost; but this evil is far more than counterbalanced by the convenience and excellence of the harbour, which is capable of containing any number of vessels of the largest size, and affords them shelter and security from all weathers, in a degree equal to any, and superior to most other harbours in the world. This advantage is of itself sufficient to render our obtaining possession of it particularly desirable, as we have thus the means of affording protection to our merchant vessels, the whole fleet of which could lay in this harbour under cover of the guns of the men of war, and still not be so crowded for room as to be in any danger of falling foul of one another.

After remaining at Hong Kong only one day, we found that we should have gone to Macao, as the merchant to whom we were consigned, was one of the few who had not removed from there to this new settlement. The pilot's teapot and pipe were therefore again established upon the skylight, and

we were once more under weigh, having thus had our thirty-six hours beating for no purpose. A repetition of this was however unnecessary, for Macao being to the westward of Hong Kong, we had the satisfaction of being able to avail ourselves of the fair wind, and spread out our studding sails, which, with the assistance of an ebb tide, carried us rapidly past the same land, a single mile of which had before cost us so much labour and time to accomplish, and, in the course of a few hours, we had changed our position, and were riding quietly at anchor in Macao roads.

Macao was the first settlement that any barbarian nation ever possessed in the Celestial Empire, and was first occupied by the Portuguese. With regard to the means by which they obtained it, there are various accounts. The one which is most generally believed, is, that it was given them as a reward for the assistance they had rendered the Chinese government, in dispersing a most formidable body of pirates, who not only committed great ravages upon the coast, but had also made them-

selves masters of the port of Macao, and blocked up the entrance to that of Canton. At this time the Chinese government applied to the Portuguese, who lent their aid, and having several vessels, readily defeated the pirates; in return for which the emperor allowed them to form a settlement at Macao. There is however one circumstance which materially affects this mode of accounting for the Portuguese having obtained possession of the place by these means, and that is, that they had been established there upwards of a century before this affair of the pirates took place.

The other version of the story is, that by means of the all powerful influence of gold, by which even Chinese mandarins are accessible, they obtained leave to erect a few sheds, in which to expose their goods for sale. This, to use a hackneyed, and almost worn out, expression, was inserting the small end of the wedge, which, with Portuguese enterprise and perseverance to drive it, soon forced its way, and opened to them a wider field for their trade, which was in a very short time established

upon a successful footing. Substantial houses at length began to appear, and the population rapidly increased, until the few sheds were at length transformed into a thriving settlement, and churches, priests, forts, and a regular garrison, followed as a matter of course not long afterwards. They are however still subject to the payment of a ground rent, which is stated by Mr. Davis to amount to 500 taëls* per annum. It cannot, therefore, properly be said to have belonged to the Portuguese, although the forts which defend it were originally built, and are now garrisoned, by them. The Chinese, however, do not in any way interfere with their internal government, which they are allowed to order as they please, and, to all outward appearances, the town belongs to them, in proof of which, a guard of their soldiers are always on duty in various parts of the town, and the flag of Portugal is conspicuously displayed at every possible point.

The trade of Macao was, at one time, con-

*About £170.

siderable, owing to the advantages which it possessed over Canton, which were, in the first place, that it was much easier of access than the latter port, which, considering that river navigation is at all times dangerous, to large vessels especially, and, moreover, that the distance was great, and the dangers numerous, gave a decided superiority to Macao; and, in the next place, that the port duties were considerably lower than at Canton. The spirit and enterprise which had thus raised it to its flourishing condition, at length began to flag, and luxury following, as it usually does after wealth, the Portuguese soon began to relax their habits of industry, and, finally dwindled down into indolence, and, consequently, insignificance. The trade has gradually decreased, and what was once a flourishing town, and the chief seat of European intercourse, has now sunk into a place of little importance. The fine houses, which are the only remains of their former grandeur, are many of them in a very dilapidated state, and throughout the whole place, there is an air of

shabby-gentility, which is rendered the more striking, by the contrast presented to the stranger upon first landing, so different from the ideas which he conceived of it when at a distance; for, when first seen upon entering the harbour, its appearance is not only good, but grand, and its large and lofty buildings, glittering in the bright sun, would convey to the beholder an idea that the town before him was the abode of magnificence and luxury. This illusion, however, disappears upon a nearer approach, for the houses show numerous outward visible signs of decay, and the bold, handsome front, is very often found affixed to what is now little better than a barn.

This struggling, as it were, to keep up appearances, is not confined to the town itself, but seems also to pervade the inhabitants themselves; that is to say, the Portuguese part of them, who adhere to a dress which may once have been fine, with a most wonderful degree of pertinacity.

At even so late a period as three years ago, Macao was a place of considerable commercial

wealth, as it was then the head quarters of our principal merchants, who gave, by their presence, some substance to what is now, since their removal to Hong Kong, nothing but a shadow. Busy clerks and wealthy men of business might then be met with in the streets, and evidences of trade were constantly visible, but now the scene is entirely changed. The splendid houses are many of them tenantless, the bustle of business has given place to the apathy of indolence, and the only occupants of the once crowded streets, are a few soldiers, or a dirty Portuguese, the faded gaudiness of whose dress but ill accords with the mean appearance of the man.

The harbour, although spacious, is only available for small vessels, on account of the insufficiency of water, which obliges those of a larger size to anchor at the inconvenient distance of between six and seven miles from the shore, which consequently prevents the easy and quick transition to and from the vessels, which is in many cases necessary, and at all times desirable.

Macao possesses few objects of interest; there are, however, the ruins of an ancient temple, which consists of three distinct tiers of building, one above the other; we have described them as tiers, and not stories, for this reason, that by three stories would be implied a structure with three landings, after the fashion of a house, whereas this temple is not so; it consists of three separate tiers, one above the other, each one of which would by itself, form a distinct and perfect building.

The only other object worthy of notice is Camöens' Cave, which derives the interest attached to it more from association than any other cause; for were we inclined to adhere rigidly to matter of fact, we should entirely destroy the charm which hangs around it, by saying that in the first place, it has no pretensions whatever to so romantic a designation as a cave; and secondly, that Camöens never so much as saw the place; this, however, would be destroying a very pleasing illusion, and since there is no object gained by doing so, we would far rather give full and implicit belief to the

tale as it is told to us, and holding as we do, that

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise,

enter that place, and allowing our imagination for a while to range at freedom, indulge in a pleasant dream, and conjuring up before us the spirit of the cave, enter at once into the feelings of the exiled bard, as he sat and penned his poem of the Lusiad: and perchance following him, in our mind's eye, through all his subsequent troubles of shipwreck and imprisonment, become so indignant at the treatment he received, as to join with him in lamenting the misery of those who are in any way dependant upon court favour, and the indifference of those in power to the claims of genius, of whose services they were once glad to avail themselves. This he too severely felt, and has expressed in the lines at the end of the seventh Book of the Lusiad, which Mickle has thus translated—

No fostering care their barbarous hands bestow,
Though to the muse their fairest fame they owe;
Oh cold may prove the future priests of fame,
Taught by my fate,————

But these are feelings which can only be entered into by those that are acquainted with the life and writings of Camöens; but thousands may enter this cave without knowing any thing of him further than that he was a Portuguese poet of celebrity, and many may, no doubt, not even be aware who Camöens was. To such, this cave can afford little interest, and we would simply advise them to pass on, and not waste their time in seeing what cannot excite in them the feelings and reminiscenses which alone constitute the charm of the spot. With such, however, as have admired his writings, and are acquainted with the eventful history of his life of persecution and trials, we may continue the subject.

Let us suppose that the whole story of his ever having sat in this cave, while writing the Lusiad, to be entirely without foundation; let us divest it of all the claim to the honour of having been visited by him; and moreover, let us allow all that the more frigid matter of fact account would assert, respecting its not having been in existence whilst

he was there; still, it must possess a considerable, if not quite an equal, charm, from the simple fact that the name of Camöens is associated with it, that by it he is recalled, vividly, to our imaginations, and that from it we can, at any rate, overlook the scene of his labours.

Upon communicating with the agent of the ship at Macao, it was found that we had to proceed to Whampoa, and, accordingly, the ship was once more placed under the charge and direction of a Chinese pilot; on this occasion, however, we were not honoured with the presence of our dignified friend who had brought us thus far, but instead of him, we had one who was as diametrically opposite in character, as it was possible for two men to be, for instead of preserving a pompous dignity upon the skylight, as his predecessor had done, this man would not allow any one to have any thing whatever to do with the vessel, except under his own orders. This was, perhaps, more necessary now than it had been before, as we were approaching a more intricate and dangerous part

of the navigation, the greatest peculiarity of which is the Chow-chow water, which is an eddy caused by the crossing of two currents, which render the ship unmanageable, and prevent her being steered without the assistance of boats to tow her head in any particular direction. To those that are unaccustomed to them, these eddies are not only a cause of considerable alarm, but, also, of some danger, and at all times great trouble. Notwithstanding the peculiarity of his phraseology, this man that was now in charge of us, was an excellent pilot, and showed considerable skill and judgment in the most difficult places; and, when any turns in the river brought the vessel's head in such a position that it was necessary to tack, he performed that manœuvre with as much ease as if he had been accustomed to our vessels all his life. There are few objects of interest to be met with on this passage, except the fishing stakes, which are strong bamboos, or stout piles, driven into the bottom, which extend sometimes half way across the passage, leaving only room for a vessel to pass

easily between them; upon these the nets are stretched, and at night, (which is the principal fishing time,) present a very singular appearance from the number of lights which are fixed upon the tops of the stakes in order to attract the fish. These, however, are all that break the monotony of a rough barren country on either side, until the arrival at the Bocca Tigris, or, as it is commonly called, the Bogue.

The Bogue, of which we have annexed a sketch at the beginning of this volume, is the entrance or mouth of the river Tigris, which flows past Whampoa up to Canton. The forts which have been erected on both sides, as well as on the islands of Wantong in the centre, entirely command the entrance to the river; and, as will be easily seen by their position, would, if properly managed, be fully sufficient to prevent any vessels from passing them. Owing, however, either to their weakness, or to the want of courage on the part of the Chinese who defended them, the "Alceste" frigate "passed leisurely through, and with one single

broadside completely silenced the fort, and sent the garrison scampering up the hill, upon the side of which it has been rather preposterously built." Were they, however, in the hands of the English, or any other nation that at all understood the art of warfare, it would take a considerable number of broadsides to silence them, if indeed that could be done at all, for before any vessel could pass, she would have to encounter the fire of not merely one, but of four forts, mounting upwards of two hundred guns.

This formidable barrier having been passed, we were now upon the thick muddy waters of the Tigris, or Canton river, as it is more generally called, and might fairly consider ourselves in China; but, although we were anxiously looking for something which might convey some idea of the country to our minds, we saw nothing whatever but almost barren blue hills on the one side, and a level swampy tract of land upon the other. For the greater part of the distance nothing was to be seen but a continued dreary waste, with hardly so

much as a tree, except at very long intervals; of pasture land there appears to be little, and indeed none such as we would call pasture land at home, for they appear to consider it a waste, to appropriate to the feeding of beasts, what can be rendered productive of food for man, and consequently all their good land is reserved for the growth of rice, which is the chief production of this part of the country, sheep and cows forming only a secondary consideration. This, however, is easily accounted for, when we consider that they live almost entirely upon rice, and consume very little meat, so that the rice which could be produced upon an acre of ground, is of considerably more importance to them than the beasts which it would feed if it were converted into pasture. Added to this, the peculiar situation of the land in this part of the country is particularly adapted to the cultivation of rice, which requires a great quantity of water, and is thus enabled to be supplied from the river without trouble. Indeed the greatest difficulty here, is to prevent the fields being flooded, in order to do

which, strong mud embankments have been made along the whole length of the river, at such points as the land was so low as to be in danger of submersion from the rising of the water; for although the entire surface of the ground, when being prepared for planting the rice, is covered with water, still at other times, such as before the harvest, it requires to be drained nearly dry, and it is therefore necessary to guard against a flood at the season, when it would be fatal to the crops. It may be readily imagined that a large extent of this flat swampy land does not present a very interesting appearance, and such may be said to be the general features of the country for the greater part of the distance to Whampoa. Nor is its appearance the worst part of this rice cultivation, for the heat of the sun acting upon these tracts of marshy ground, has precisely the same effect here as at Batavia, and occasions intermittent fever to be very prevalent, especially amongst strangers; for, although situated almost entirely in the temperate zone, the heat which is experienced in the southern

parts of China, is, at certain periods, more intense than that of other countries in the same latitude, and the hot season is consequently much more unhealthy here than in India. The general climate of China, however, is not hotter, upon the average of the whole year, than that of India, for although the thermometer will frequently rise above 100° during the summer, still the winter is very much more severe than is ever felt in India, and even in the neighbourhood of Whampoa, which is within the tropics, ice is occasionally seen in the month of January; and even in March (which was the month in which we reached it,) we were obliged to wear warm clothing during the early part of the morning. These great excesses of heat and cold may be accounted for in this manner: in the first place, it is well known that water is a great equalizer of temperature, and that consequently the absence of it renders any continent more subject to excess of both heat and cold than an island. Let us next look at the position of China. It is connected to the north with the arctic

regions, without any intervening water to modify the cold, and it moreover derives little or no warmth from the tropics, owing to the prevalence of the N.E. monsoon during the winter, which prevents the warm air (which would tend to render the season more temperate) from being borne to the northward. This will account for the severity of the winter, and now let us consider the summer. Its connection with such a vast continent, is, according to the theory before mentioned, also the cause of excessive heat, and in addition to this, the monsoon has then changed, and an immense volume of warm air is brought from the tropics. There is moreover another circumstance which has some influence, and that is the fact that the eastern parts of all continents are more subject to extremes of temperature than the western. This, therefore, will account for what certainly surprized us very much, that so late as March we should be very glad to avail ourselves of our thick warm clothing, when we were actually within the tropics.

The monotony of blue hills on the one hand, and

level swamps on the other, was at length broken by our arrival at the second bar, which is a point in the river so shallow that vessels are not able to pass except at certain states of the tide, and large ships only at high water. The operation of crossing these bars, is one of considerable trouble and expence, for a number of boats have to be hired to sound the different depths, and point out the safe channel, for it is only in one particular part that a vessel is enabled to pass at all. These boats present a curious appearance when the passage happens to be made during the night time, for then each one is provided with a lantern, which is suspended on a pole, and the two rows between which the vessel is to sail, bear somewhat a resemblance to a lamp-lit street.

To the left of this bar is a hill, upon the summit of which is the first Chinese pagoda we had seen, and which may decidedly be said to be the first characteristic of the country that we had as yet had an opportunity of seeing; for, although the forts at the Bogue are singular in their way, still

they are approximations (certainly in a very slight degree) to any other stone forts, but pagodas have always been associated in our minds with China, and consequently this one, although at too great a distance to be properly examined, was an object of considerable interest. These pagodas are temples dedicated to Fo, and many of them are exceedingly handsome. In the interior is a spiral staircase which leads to the top, the ascent of which, however, does not by any means repay the traveller's curiosity, for their most beautiful part is the exterior. With regard to their being always composed of nine or seven stories, these numbers are supposed to have reference to some theory of religion, but in what manner we have never been able to learn satisfactorily.

The river at this point turns at a sharp angle, which has no doubt been the cause of the bar, and from here we caught sight of the shipping laying at Whampoa. Here, too, the barren blue hills were exchanged for green wood, above which the house tops of a village were discernible, and in the

course of an hour we were at anchor in Blenheim Reach, which is entitled to the designation of tolerably pretty. We were now fairly in China, and evidences of the country were visible on all sides, but still there were English ships and boats, and all the natives about us speaking English, with as much ease as if it had been their own language, which considerably spoilt the effect of the first arrival. Still, however, there was much to be seen and to be wondered at; there were the men with their long tails reaching down to the ground; the women with their frying-pan faces, and hair done up in the form of a tea-pot handle; and the little children with immense eyes, and a lump of wood tied to their backs, in order to prevent their being drowned, in case they should fall out of the boats in which they were born, and which will be their only home. These children, when very small, are carried by their mothers, on their backs; and it is no uncommon sight to see a woman either pulling or steering a boat, with her child fastened behind her by a piece of coarse cloth. This system

of employing women in boats, appears singular to us, but it is the general practice here, and indeed women may be seen so employed oftener than men. They are not, however, to be distinguished from the men by any particular delicacy of feature or form, for their faces are, from their constant exposure to all the changes of weather, and the heat of the sun, as dark, and, if we may be allowed to apply such an epithet to any of the female sex, as *coarse* as those of the men. They are moreover lusty, and "bend as strongly on their oars" as those whose more especial duty would appear to be hard work, according to our notions of things. The difference between the strength of men and women is, however, not so great here as with us, for being accustomed to the same work from their earliest days, the weaker sex are not in reality so much so, and therefore what appears to the stranger to be an unnatural hardship, is nothing of the sort, and the women are just as able to do what is required of them as the men.

There is also another point worthy of remark,

with regard to the employment of women, and that is that in China they are not treated in the same way as in many other countries, where they are considered as little better than slaves, and obliged to do all sorts of work, whilst the men sit and smoke their pipes in perfect indolence; neither, on the other hand, will the men perform all the labour themselves, but make a fair distribution of it, and thus we constantly see both sexes alternately employed at the same work, and frequently whilst a woman is doing a man's work, such as rowing, the man is employed in cooking.

The river at Whampoa divides into two principal, besides a number of other tributary, streams; the one to the right leading to Canton, and the left branch being the one in which we were anchored, to which the English have given the name of Blenheim Reach. The shipping are thus divided into two fleets, the greater number of vessels generally preferring Whampoa Reach, on account of its being nearer the town, which enables them to get their boats, with cargo, rather earlier

in the morning, and also shortens the distance to Canton, by nearly a mile. The larger vessels, however, have chosen Blenheim Reach, on account of the greater facilities of moving, there being more room for getting under weigh, which they would not have in the other and more crowded branch. As it frequently happens that vessels are detained for five or six months for their cargoes of tea, and there being no means of amusement on shore, the crews of the large ships generally employ their leisure time in rigging all their boats, and getting up regattas, for which this length of fine open water is particularly adapted; this serves to pass away the time very agreeably, as sufficient occupation is found in fitting out boats in the first instance, and subsequently many little alterations suggest themselves, at almost every trial, so that the amusement is interminable, and added to this, there are fresh matches constantly making, and fresh races to be run, the prizes at which are, often, considerable, as they are derived from a general contribution of the officers

of all the ships, which at certain seasons amounts to a large sum.

Beyond this there is little or nothing to be done at Whampoa, for, although there are one or two walks which are very well for once, still, their beauty is not sufficient to be worth a repetition. During one of these, we were considerably amused by seeing, in a small village, what reminded us very forcibly of Greenwich fair, and that was a little stall by the road side, with a board divided into eight squares, upon each of which was deposited, a small parcel of sweetmeat with the exception of one, which was blank. In the centre stood a teetotum, which was to be spun, and the spinner was entitled to the contents of the square which answered to the number which came uppermost; if this chanced to be the blank, the proprietor, of course, gained the small amount that was paid for a spin, but if not, he sold his sweatmeat at a good profit. Although, judging from the appearance of the stuff, we were perfectly satisfied that the prize was not eatable, still, for the sake of

the recollections which this stall had awakened, we took the teetotum, and, having deposited our venture upon the table, were gratified with obtaining a packet of very dirty sugar and grease, of which we made a present to a small child with an incipient tail, who was most anxiously watching the proceedings of the barbarians. Having derived considerable gratification from this performance, we proceeded upon our walk through a tolerably pretty part, until we arrived at a joss house, or temple, into which we entered.

Immediately opposite us, at the far end of the temple, were the three mystic figures, representing the three forms of Fo, before whom was placed a table, covered with all sorts of gaudy tinsel ornaments, containing incense, which is kept constantly burning, by night, as well as by day; lamps were placed in various parts, and the walls adorned with a variety of most grotesque figures painted upon the wood in all directions, and, also, upon different coloured papers; these, with a profuse display of black and red letters, and streamers

of silk, completed the decoration, but not the curiosity of the place. Upon the table lay two pieces of wood, which were placed like two halves of a bean, which when placed together they also resembled; being curious to know the use of these, we enquired of a Chinaman whom we had brought with us to act as interpreter, and were informed that they were for the purpose of divination; and that, if we wished, the priest would divine "for a consideration," even for barbarians. Having expressed our desire that he would do so, he proceeded to perform the ceremony, which was this: having placed the two halves together, we were directed to drop them upon the ground, and our fortune depended upon their position. If both fell with their flat surfaces upwards, it was to be good, if downwards, bad, and if one each way, middling. Our case was the latter, and we feel ourselves bound to admit that the prophecy has turned out correct, and that our luck has been middling ever since.

After having taken a correct drawing of the

interior, as well as the front, which was beautifully carved and ornamented, we returned to our boat. These drawings have, we are sorry to say, been subsequently spoiled, amongst the rest; a loss which we shall ever deeply regret, as we are thereby deprived of one of the greatest pleasures which are to be derived from visiting foreign lands, which is, that of looking over the drawings of places, which are thus much more forcibly recalled to the memory than by any description, however elaborate and minute.

CHAPTER XI.

CHINA.—APPROACH TO CANTON.—JUNKS.—DISCOVERY OF THE MARINER'S COMPASS.—GUNPOWDER AND PRINTING.—STEAM NOT WANTED.—MODE OF PRINTING.—BOAT POPULATION.—CONDITION OF THEIR LOWER ORDERS COMPARED WITH OURS.—CHINESE CHARACTER.—FIRST LANDING.—COMMISSIONAIRES. PORTABLE BARBER'S SHOP.—MURDER COMMITTED IN THE OPEN STREET.—SHOPPING.—STREETS.—HOG LANE.—POPULATION OF CANTON AND CHINA.—HOTEL.—SMUGGLING.—OPIUM TRADE.—DUCKS.—TAKING IN A TEA CARGO.

> There ere the cannon's rage in Europe roared,
> The cannon's thunder on the foe was poured.
> And here the trembling needle sought the north,
> Ere time in Europe brought the wonder forth.
>
> *Lusiad (Mickle).*

WHAMPOA itself being nothing more than an ordinary village, with nothing about it worthy of particular description, we will pass on to Canton.

The Chinese certainly appear to have taken

every possible precaution, and spared no expense to render the approach to Canton a matter of as much difficulty as they could, and have endeavoured, by all the means that their ingenuity could devise, to make the river impassable by the vessels of foreign nations, for, in addition to the numerous forts which have been erected at various points, they have also placed impediments in the way of navigation in the river itself. For the last two miles of the distance from Whampoa, the progress of even a small boat is attended with considerable danger and difficulty, unless its occupants are well acquainted with the channel, for in the neighbourhood of Canton the river is full of rocks, which are just below the surface of the water, and consequently not visible until too late to be avoided. There are also piles driven into the bottom, which extend the greater part of the way across, leaving only a narrow passage at one end, through which the water rushes with great rapidity.

The first objects by which the attention is arrested on approaching Canton, are the junks,

which are the most unwieldy-looking vessels in the world, especially the larger ones, which are sometimes of eight hundred or a thousand tons burden. To us it appears a matter of no small wonder how they can be managed at all, or how they can stand any weather, for in their construction there does not seem to have been any regard whatever paid to securing the vessel from the effects of the sea, which, indeed they could scarcely have contemplated their ever being exposed to, for the stern, instead of being carefully closed in, and made stronger than any other part, is left entirely open, in order to admit a huge rudder, which is about six times as large as that of one of our seventy-fours, and cannot be better described than by applying to it the definition given by our once popular friend Jim-Crow, who calls a rudder

> A thing just like a cellar door
> A swinging on behind.

They seldom carry more than one sail upon each mast, although they do occasionally set a small topsail, but that is only under very favourable

circumstances, and is of little or no use. They may, therefore, be said to have but one sail (on each mast), which, instead of being made of canvass like ours, is composed of mat with bamboos stretching across at short distances apart; the sail being by this means rendered much stiffer and flatter than a canvass one, enables the Chinese junks to lay much nearer the wind than our vessels can; but any little advantage which might be gained by these means, is more than counterbalanced by the construction of the hull, which, being perfectly flat bottomed, cannot have the same hold upon the water as ours which have a keel, and, consequently, the benefit to be derived from the peculiarity of their sails is lost by their not being able to maintain it. There is also another cause which gives them an inferiority in this point to our vessels, and that is that the faster an English vessel goes through the water, the less she goes to leeward; but the contrary is the case with the junks, for the greater the force of wind, the greater their leeway. They have a number of other pecu-

liarities, amongst which we may notice that their anchors are composed of wood instead of iron, and are only provided with one fluke; that instead of having copper or other metal to defend the bottom from the action of the water, they have a sort of plaster, which becomes very hard; and that the stern board is generally covered with a variety of fanciful devices, such as dragons, peacocks, and butterflies, painted in all the colours of the rainbow, which, added to the number of red and white flags and streamers, with which they are always decorated, gives them a very gaudy appearance. But the object most worthy of remark connected with them is the custom of painting a large eye upon each bow, the object of which is, as we were informed by our boatman, who spoke English, that the ship may be able to see where she is going.

Ship building and navigation seem to be the points in which the Chinese principally fail, and in which they make less advances and improvements than in any other branch of arts and sciences. This appears the more surprising from the fact

that they have the honour of being the first discoverers of the mariner's compass, which was known to them many years before its use reached us. They differ from us, however, with regard to its nature and properties, for they insist that the south is the point of magnetic attraction. They have also the same theory of variation, with this difference, that we call the variation west, reckoning as we do from the north point, whereas the first point with them being south, makes it east.

In addition to the mariner's compass, they have also an undisputed claim to the invention of two of the most important discoveries that have ever been made, namely, gunpowder and the art of printing. There is, however, no just ground for detracting from the merit of the European discoverer, whoever he may be, (for amongst so many claimants it is difficult to decide as to who is the best entitled to the honour), neither is there any reason for supposing that the art was imparted to us by the Chinese, and consequently those from whom we have derived it are equally entitled to

our thanks and praise. Still, however, the fact materially tends to prove the progress of civilization amongst the Chinese, and that, although they are inferior to us in the application of these arts, they must, nevertheless, be an intelligent people to have discovered these things at all; and that, from the little intercourse which they have had with other nations, all the discoveries they have made, and all the advantages they have subsequently derived therefrom, have been purely the result of their own ingenuity.

Steam, which is second only to printing, seems never to have occurred to them, which however is not to be wondered at, for, if we consider the nature of the country, the immense population, and the habits of the people, it will be seen that the introduction of steam, even in the state of perfection to which it has now arrived, would in all probability prove a curse instead of a blessing, and, although it might benefit a few, they would bear a very small proportion indeed to the many who would be ruined by it.

Situated as they are, with their own peculiar ideas of self importance, which renders them perfectly independent of any other nation, living entirely for themselves, and having no desire to increase their wealth by commerce, any innovation which decreased the amount of manual labour would be merely throwing that number out of employ; for the effect of the introduction of steam would be, not to increase the quantity of manufactures, but merely to diminish the number of men who now derive subsistence from them. We must not, however, be understood to mean, that at some future time, when their eyes shall have been opened to the advantages of trade, when they shall possess the means of exporting their goods in their own vessels, and other ports having been opened, the commercial enterprise, which is now almost unknown to them, shall have discovered an inexhaustible source of wealth, that *then* the introduction of steam would not be a blessing. Far from it, they would then have an increased demand for manufactures, to meet which they must have a

proportionate increase of labour, and this must be obtained by the agency of steam, which would then be as great an acquisition as it would, if introduced at present, prove an injury.

With regard to printing, their general mode differs slightly from ours, as they seldom use moveable types, on account of the thousands of different characters in their language, which would involve such a complication that it would be most tedious work for the compositor to pick out the required type, as their language does not consist of letters, which being put together in different positions, form an endless variety of words, but each one has its corresponding character. This, however, is merely the general principle, for the same word may be made to answer to a number of things by a slight variation in the pronunciation, and consequently the number of words may be five or six times as many as the characters. Still, however, the immense number of types which would be required, render their use objectionable, and the following system is therefore resorted to.

The book having been first written out by persons who gain their livelihood by so doing, a piece of wood is made perfectly smooth and even, and is then rubbed over with a glutinous wash, upon this the pages are laid with the writing downwards, and the paper, which is very thin, is afterwards rubbed off, leaving only the impression of the characters upon the board, in precisely the same manner as our own transferring, which was at one time so much in vogue amongst ladies. The engraver then cuts out all the wood which intervenes between the characters, thus leaving them raised. The printer next inks their surfaces, and a very slight pressure upon the paper is sufficient to transfer the impression. The more general practice, however, is to lay the page on the block, and simply to run a dry brush over the back. Their paper not being of sufficient thickness to bear printing on both sides, on account of transparency, they have resorted to the expedient of printing two pages upon the same sheet, and then folding them back to back, thus bringing them in

the proper order for reading, and also preventing the characters of the one showing through into the other. The fold is always upon the outer edge, which makes the leaves stiffer, and gives the book the appearance of being uncut. One great advantage to be derived from this system is its cheapness, and another is, that, should the book have a greater sale than was expected, a fresh supply is obtained at merely the cost of the paper, for the light pressure that is required to give the impression is not sufficient to wear out or in any way injure the type.

Our object, before we began this digression, was to give some account of the city of Canton, but having been led on from one subject to the other, we have wandered very far from our original intention, to which, however, we must now return.

Upon a nearer approach to the city, the passage of the river becomes a matter of considerable difficulty, and is excessively tedious, owing to the crowd of boats, which are collected together in such numbers that the scene presented by them is

one of the novelties most likely to attract the stranger's attention. The principal feature of this extraordinary assemblage of boats is, that they have not been attracted to one spot upon any particular business, or for any object which having been obtained they would again disperse, but that they are always so collected, and upon a more attentive examination it will be found that they are arranged in regular lines, leaving a narrow passage between them, of just sufficient width to allow the largest of them to move its position, if requisite. With the exception of these occasional breaks, the whole forms a mass so closely arranged that it is perfectly easy to pass from one to the other, and thus traverse the whole extent, which reaches for a considerable distance. The number of people who are thus accommodated, and who are born, live, and die, with no other home, is astonishing, and to the stranger almost incredible. This river population form an entirely distinct portion of the community, having regulations and laws peculiar to themselves, and are not allowed

to marry into the families of any but their own people.

There are few customs in the world which are so likely to strike the foreigner upon his first arrival in a new country, as this boat-town; so perfectly different to any thing he has ever seen, and so peculiar in itself, that the wonder which is excited by the novelty of the scene, does not disappear so readily as the generality of other customs to which the mind soon becomes accustomed after a short residence. Notwithstanding the manner in which these boats are crowded together, which, judging from the consequences of such an occurrence amongst our own nation, we should naturally imagine to be productive of interminable quarrels and discord, we find that, throughout the entire mass of this aquatic population, which amounts to some thousands, the most perfect harmony and order prevails. And yet, if we were to place an equal number of our countrymen and women, taken from the same class, which is one of the lowest, if not the very worst, of all, we can form

but a very faint idea of the scene that would ensue upon any one of the boats making an attempt to move its position, which is here done without the slightest disturbance whatever.

Then, again, what must we imagine would be the consequence of placing a large family, of the lowest of the low, in a small space which measures about twelve feet, by six or seven, and covered with a roof so low, that it is impossible for any but a child to stand up inside it; should we not have filth in its most disgusting state, and consequent unhealthiness, and yet, here are these people always clean, happy, and contented; this comparison will, however, only apply to one side of the question, for we cannot contemplate the placing of either English or Irish in such a position, for that would be impossible, we would merely wish to show that, under even these most disadvantageous circumstances, the Chinese are very far superior to the more civilised nations, in the management and condition of their lower orders. And why is it so? there must be some cause which can be traced to

the fountain head of national prosperity, or depression, in their legislature; but, in order to show in what manner, we would rather refer the reader to the opinion of one whose long residence in the country has given him better opportunities of obtaining information upon the subject, and is, consequently, more likoly to be correct in his details. We allude to Mr. Davis, whose interesting work upon China we would recommend, for the perusal of any that have not already had that pleasure.

Speaking of the peaceful character of the Chinese, he says, " It is deserving of remark, that " the general prosperity and peace of China, has " been very much promoted by the diffusion of " intelligence and education through the lower " classes. Amongst the countless millions that " constitute the empire, almost every man can " read and write sufficiently for the ordinary pur- " poses of life, and a respectable share of these " acquirements goes low down in the scale of " society.

"As regards the peaceful and orderly character "by which the Chinese are distinguished, there is "no doubt that they are upon the whole amongst "the most good humoured and peaceable people "in the world; and the chief causes of this must "be sought for in their political and social insti- "tutions. It is a general rule, say they, that the "worst of men are fondest of change and com- "motion, hoping that they may thereby benefit "themselves; but by adherence to a steady quiet "system, affairs proceed without confusion, and "bad men have nothing to gain."

Another great point, which tends considerably to raise the lower class, is that amongst the Chinese wealth does not impart the same degree of consequence to its possessors, as is the case with other nations; it is contrary to human nature to suppose that it has no influence whatever, but still there is less weight attached to the possession of wealth alone, without other personal accomplishments, talents, or good qualities, to command respect, than in perhaps any other country in the

world. Upon the other hand, poverty is not looked upon with that contempt which it meets with in this country, and let a man only be industrious, honest, and well behaved, he is looked upon as a worthy member of the community, and every assistance and encouragement that can possibly be given is afforded him by the mandarins, who themselves owe their places not to interest and favour obtained by money, but to their own talents and abilities, which consequently renders them more disposed to look well upon any of the inferior class who may evince the same disposition, though in a humbler way.

These, and a few other causes having the same tendency, have raised the lower orders of China above the level of the same classes in other countries, and we consequently find that even the boat population of Canton, which may be considered as one of the lowest classes of people, and in the worst part of the empire, are better regulated, and conduct themselves with more order, decency, and respectability, than is to be found

amongst those whom we consider as two or three degrees removed from the lowest rank of our own country.

Much has been said about the treachery, deceit, and unfairness of dealing, which is found amongst the Chinese, and the whole nation have been stigmatized as a race of men whom no treaty could bind, and whose faith was not to be relied upon; but this is an unjust conclusion, and is merely deduced from a few instances which have occurred in their dealings with us. But before we pass so sweeping a censure upon such slight grounds, we should bear in mind that they look upon us as a race of barbarians, whose only object is to establish ourselves in their country, and get all we can out of them, and that, therefore, they are perfectly justified in turning the tables upon us, and, if they can by any means overreach us, they are foiling us with our own weapons. In their dealings amongst themselves they are strictly honest, and nothing can be more absurd than to judge of the whole nation by the conduct of a few of the inhabitants

of Canton, who may be very justly accused of dishonesty, as indeed is the case in any port to which the English have any traffic. With equal justice might a foreigner ascribe the same faults to us, when his whole experience has been confined to the Ratcliffe Highway, which is a much fairer sample of the tradesmen of England, than Canton is of those of China.

But it is now time that we should allow our reader to be introduced to the town of Canton, of which he has as yet seen nothing, his whole attention having been sufficiently engaged with the novelty of the boat town, which of itself presents sufficient objects worthy of remark to reconcile him to the tediousness of making his way through the mass to the shore. We will now however suppose him landed, immediately in front of the European Factory; which being nothing more than a common stone house, or rather row of houses, presenting a tolerably fine frontage to the river, is hardly worth stopping at for the sake of giving a more particular description of what the

stranger, who wishes to see a Chinese town, would rather not have seen at all, as it interferes with the idea, which he would otherwise be better able to entertain, of the narrow streets and poking alleys, which it is his more particular object to visit.

It being impossible to pursue any regular method of describing the various objects which may present themselves to our observation, we shall merely give an account of the events which occurred to us, and what principally suggested itself as worthy of remark, in the order which we may happen to find the most convenient.

Immediately upon landing, we were surrounded by a multitude of fellows, the most impudent of whom imparted to us, in the most confidential manner, that all the rest were rogues, and that he was the only honest one amongst them, at the same time presenting us with a small piece of paper which informed us that Lunefoong, residing at No. 5, New China Street, dealt in ivory, tortoiseshell, silks, &c. Having previously had some

little experience in France with commissionaires, and knowing that it was always advisable to trust to the tender mercies of one, who, let him be as great a rogue as he will, retains to himself the exclusive privilege of cheating you, we determined to resign ourselves to the care of the emissary from No. 5, especially as he spoke very tolerable English, which, by the bye, may be generally taken as a pretty certain standard of rascality, the abilities in that line always increasing in proportion to the knowledge of our language.

Being perfectly satisfied in our own minds that we were being led like a sheep to the slaughter, or, in other words, were going to be cheated to a considerable extent, we made up our minds not to expend any very great sum until we had become better acquainted with the town, and discovered in what way our money could be laid out to the best advantage. Experience must be bought, and since it is not to be obtained for nothing, we simply resolved to purchase it as cheaply as we could.

Having promised our commissionaire that we

would patronise the shop which he recommended, and thus set his mind at ease with regard to the per-centage that he was to get upon our purchase, we proceeded at our leisure through the streets, taking a note in our mind of all that came under our observation.

We had not, however, far to go without having occasion to use the pencil of memory, for, at the distance of a very few yards from the landing place, an object certainly worthy of record presented itself. This was a portable barber's shop, consisting of a stool, which was fitted up with drawers to contain all the necessary instruments of his vocation, and at the same time served for a seat; and a small chafing dish, upon which was placed a small vessel containing water. This simple apparatus was readily transported from place to place by being slung upon a bamboo, the stool at the one end balancing the chafing dish at the other. As soon as a customer was perceived, the stool was immediately set down, no matter where the situation might be, and there, in the open street, the opera-

tion was expeditiously performed, and the shop again in motion.

The most striking features of Canton are the narrowness of the streets, which are entirely paved with flagstones, and the absence of horses, or any beasts of burden, which to us appears so singular.

Whilst proceeding on our way to the shops, we had an opportunity of witnessing a sight for which we were not at all prepared by any previous description having been given us, and were consequently able to appreciate it the more; for the general effect of another person's description, especially if he be not able to refrain from the common failing of exaggeration, is to excite within us expectations which, not being founded upon strict fact, are generally doomed to be disappointed.

At a corner of a street we perceived a man talking angrily to a little boy of about fourteen years of age, who appeared, by the rapidity of his utterance and various gestures, to be making some retort which increased the rage of the man, who,

becoming red in the face and exhibiting all the symptoms of excessive passion, finally struck the boy with such force as to knock him down, then kneeling upon his arms to prevent his moving, he produced a knife and drew it swiftly across the boy's throat, notwithstanding the most violent struggles to prevent it; the blood now flowed plentifully, over the poor child's neck, and with the most frightful expression of fiendish passion, the man walked off. Upon our expressing no small surprise that such a diabolical murder should be committed in a public street in broad daylight, and yet the murderer be allowed to go unpunished, our guide very coolly replied, that we should see what would happen presently. Our imagination, of course, pictured to itself a mandarin suddenly appearing, and ordering the murderer to be strangled, or some such summary proceeding; but what was our surprise when we beheld the very man who had committed the deed come quietly back, and, after lifting the boy's hand and letting it fall listlessly down again, as if with the intention

of seeing if he really had killed him, at length take him by the arm and raise him up, when, to our great astonishment, the lad opened his eyes, and showed us that the whole affair had been nothing but a trick, for the successful performance of which he proceeded to collect the small coins which were being showered in from all sides.

After having been once seen, this trick has nothing so very wonderful about it, as the boy is of course a confederate, and the whole mystery of the throat cutting lays in the knife, which is so contrived that the handle contains a quantity of blood, which, by a very simple contrivance, is discharged on to the boy's neck at the same moment that the blade is drawn across it; but still the whole is a most admirable piece of acting, especially on the part of the boy when dying, and, in order to excite the public sympathy to the highest possible point, a lad is generally selected whose appearance is the most interesting, and most likely to create the strongest feeling of compassion.

Having been excessively pleased with the happy termination of this tragedy, the only fault of which was, that it was too natural at the commencement, we passed on our way, and entered New China Street.

The account which Mr. Davis has given of the Chinese shops, must not be applied to them as they exist at present, for he has described them as they were about twelve years ago, dirty, little, poking places, "closed in by gloomy black "shutters, and very ill lit by a small skylight, or "rather a hole in the roof." For this, however, we must now substitute a tolerably handsome front, with the windows filled with specimens of the articles for sale within, not, however, in the style of an English shop, where the greatest art is exhibited in the arrangement of the articles in the window, but simply two or three different sorts of goods, in order to inform the passers by what the shop is. The interior, however, is very tastefully arranged, especially when the articles are of the miscellaneous description kept by our friend

Lunefoong, in whose shop we were, according to promise. On each side of us were large cases with glass doors, through which we could perceive a collection of articles, as well adapted to tempt purchasers to lay out their money as could possibly be devised. If he was a lover of antiques and quaint figures, there was a collection of all sizes, sorts, and prices; was he anxious to take home a few presents, there he might see articles suitable for relations and friends of either sex, and varying in value from a shilling to twenty or thirty pounds, fans, snuff boxes, card cases, inkstands, chess men, *cum multis aliis,* far too numerous to mention, amongst all which it is almost impossible to make a selection, and we were thus placed in much the same situation as a young lady who has to select a scarf or dress at a west-end house, where the difficulty is not to find one that she likes, but to decide which she likes best. In just such a position are we situated, and on this point we must again take upon ourselves to contradict Mr. Davis, when he says that shopping at Canton is

far from being an agreeable occupation; for, on the contrary, we would say that there is no single street in the whole world which would detain a stranger so long in its shops as the one of which we are now speaking; for, after having quitted the ivory and silk shop, we find that the very next door is one at which we may spend a very agreeable half hour in examining the beautiful ornaments and articles of furniture which are made of the lacquer ware; but the most worthy of attention is the curiosity shop, in which the lover of antiques may be fairly bewildered, with the number of objects exciting his admiration upon all sides.

There is, however, one fact which it is necessary to bear in mind whilst dealing in these shops, and that is, that these tradesmen are the greatest rogues in the whole empire, and that the price which is first asked is, in general, about three times the amount of that which they intend ultimately to accept, and that any expression indicating admiration of any particular object, will have the effect of increasing its price to a still

greater extent; and, in the matter of curiosities, the greatest care must be used, that an article which is comparatively worthles is not palmed off as valuable, by merely affixing an exorbitant price upon it; for fictitious antiques are much more common here than genuine ones, which indeed are almost impossible to get, as the Chinese themselves are great collectors of curiosities of all descriptions. The only plan, therefore, is to consider what an article is worth in your own estimation, and give no more, as by these means you will, at any rate, have the satisfaction of being happy in your ignorance.

Having passed through this, as well as old China Street, which is very similar to it, we extended our peregrinations through two or three of the others, which are very much narrower, leaving only room for two, or at the most three, persons to walk abreast. The shops in these streets differ from those which we had just left, in that they are entirely open to the street, and are not provided with windows, which those which are more peculi-

arly intended for European trade generally are; in fact we may distinguish between them by saying that the ones which we first visited are more like European shops upon a small scale, and the others have rather the appearance of an Oriental bazaar, or perhaps more like our own fruit and fish shops. Here, as every where else in China, may be seen a profusion of tinsel, and a variety of different coloured papers, covering the walls.

We now come to Hog Lane, which is the grand resort for all European sailors, and has not inappropriately been so named, for, in passing down this street, it is no uncommon sight to see two or three of our seamen reduced to a state in which they are very little superior to the before mentioned animal; and moreover the whole lane itself is one mass of filth, and a composition of smells not the most savoury, fully warrants the appellation given to it. In this locality are situated all those shops which present the greatest attractions to the sailor, namely the grog shops, at which a most villainous description of liquor is retailed, which

has the effect of completely stupifying the unfortunate fellows who are induced to drink it, and who then become an easy prey to the most unlimited extortion, if not actual robbery.

Any one whose business has led them through some of the worst of the streets in the neighbourhood of our different docks in London, may be able to form some slight idea of Hog Lane, when we say that it is not a quarter the width of any one of them, and that the wretchedness of the worst of those houses is actual comfort compared with these dirty little hovels, which generally consist of two rooms, the upper one being reached by means of a ladder.

With regard to the population of Canton, many different accounts have been given, some of which have stretched it to a million; this, however, must be an exaggeration of several thousands, for the circumference of the city, taken to the farthest limits on all sides, is only eight miles at the very outside, and even this extent is only to be obtained by including parts which are but thinly inhabited.

Allowing it however every possible advantage, and including also the boat population, which forms no inconsiderable item in the amount; still the number must appear incredible, if we compare the size and population of Canton with that of London, and although much less of the ground is taken up by streets here than in European towns, still the extent of house room is not increased, for the generality of their houses do not exceed one story in heighth.

That Canton is very densely populated there can be no doubt, but there appears to be a fully sufficient number left, after deducting at least one quarter from this amount, which is certainly immense considering the size of the place; and were it even to be reduced one third, there would still remain upwards of 666,000, which may be considered as a very tolerable population for a town of about seven miles in circumference. It is no doubt very easy to estimate in millions, but when we are dealing with such high numbers, it would be always advisable to bear in mind that every

additional one is a matter worthy of some consideration, in as much as it is of considerable importance in itself; and these remarks upon the population of Canton will apply also to that of the whole empire, which, according to the Chinese census, amounts to the prodigious sum of *three hundred and eighty millions !!!* which, being diffused over about 2,500,000 square miles, would give 153 persons to be supported upon each square mile of ground; which, considering that no account has been taken of deserts, mountains, rivers, &c. (all which are included in the measurement of the empire, but which can be of no service towards producing food for the people), would require the whole of the land to be applied to the production of sustenance, to which it would, indeed, be hardly adequate, even if all other considerations, such as articles of export, were put out of the question.

The only conclusion to which we can possibly arrive then is, that this return is a fictitious one, owing either to an erroneous system of taking the census, or to wilful misrepresentation on the part

of the returning officers, and, consequently, this total must be subjected to the process before mentioned, and reduced about one third.

We now come to the dress of the Chinese, which amongst the higher orders is generally very handsome; the difference of the costume of the various ranks consists, however, rather in the quality of the stuff of which they are made, than in any particular form, which is the same amongst all classes. It consists of a long loose frock, made of silk or crape for the higher, and cotton for the lower orders; this, with a pair of excessively wide nether garments, completes the principal part of the summer attire, so far as the necessary part is concerned, but there are innumerable other little additions, the quantity and style of which depend upon the rank of the wearer, such as the fan case, the tobacco pouch, and the purse; all which are generally composed of beautifully embroidered silk or leather. The winter costume differs from this, in that the season requires a considerable quantity of extra clothing, which consists of a spencer made

of crape, or with those that can afford it, English cloth, and lined with lamb's wool. The flowing trowsers are also confined by a nondescript article, half stocking half gaiter, which reaches above the knee. The shoes, which are the most curious articles of dress, are composed of cotton or silk, with soles of felt, about an inch and a half or two inches in thickness, which have the effect of making the men look considerably taller than they really are, so that it is a matter of great importance here to know whether the shoes are included in the height of a person.

They, however, possess one great advantage over us with regard to dress, and that is that they are not subject to any freaks of fashion, but the same style which was worn by their forefathers is in existence now, and probably will be for some time to come.

The costume of the women differs much less from that of the men than in any other country, their dress also consisting of a loose frock of thin silk, but worn over one of coloured satin; they

also wear trowsers, which are gathered in at the bottom, in order to display the small feet, which are considered so beautiful. This dress, though very simple, is excessively becoming, and being made of the very best materials that China can produce, is excessively handsome from the richness of the silks. Their mode of wearing the hair after marriage is particularly bad, as it is done up in a bunch at the back of the head, and there fastened with two silver or gold headed arrows; even before that ceremony takes place, their hair is very little ornament to them, as it is then allowed to grow in broad tails down their backs, in a manner not unlike very young girls in England.

The strange caprice of taste which looks upon small feet as an addition to beauty, is almost as absurd as our own fashion of reducing the waist, with this difference, however, that it is not so pernicious in its effects, as the one only prevents the use of the feet, whilst the other materially affects the health of the unfortunate victims, who,

if they could only be made to believe it, do not at all improve their appearance by aping the wasp; for the tightest lacing possible cannot give beauty to those who do not possess it, and those who do, need only to be convinced that the charms which nature has given cannot be improved. We look upon the Chinese system of crippling the feet as a most barbarous custom, whilst at the same time we forget that we are guilty of a thousand times greater absurdity ourselves.

There is now at Canton an hotel, which has been lately established by an American, and is consequently as dirty, and conducted in the same slovenly manner, as the generality of places in which the Yankees "most do congregate" generally are. The only recommendation that it possesses is that in wet weather it is a very convenient place for shelter, as some little amusement is to be found in playing upon the billiard table, even though it is but a sorry affair. We are, however, bound in justice to say that the proprietor of the establishment is entitled to our thanks, for the

accommodation which is thus afforded to strangers, the want of which was often a source of great annoyance to those who were not personally acquainted with any of the merchants residing at Canton.

We must now once more transfer the scene to Whampoa, as there are a few things which we omitted to describe whilst at that place, and which, although they have no reference to it more particularly than to any other part of China, have still less connection with Canton. We allude to the system of opium smuggling, and other matters connected with shipping.

In the regulation of port dues considerable alteration has been made within the last few years, but the old system had an inevitable tendency to encourage smuggling, on account of the large amount of duties which pressed more heavily upon small ships than upon the larger ones, the amount not being proportioned to the size of the vessel; the consequence of this was that a most iniquitous system was carried on, which, for some time,

puzzled the Chinese authorities considerably. The plan was this: a large vessel first went up the river, paid her port dues, and discharged her cargo, which being cleared, another vessel came along side during the night, transferred her cargo into the larger one, and hauled off again before day-light; on the following day this was again discharged into the boats as part of the original cargo, and so on to the extent of fourteen or fifteen vessels, who thus cheated the government, the duty being levied, not upon the quantity of goods, but upon the ship herself, which was thus made to contain about 8,000 tons, much to the astonishment of the Chinese.

The next extraordinary system of smuggling, which is carried on in open defiance of the laws, is the opium trade; which, although prohibited by the government, as being injurious to the people, is nevertheless almost entirely supported by the very mandarins, whose duty it is to suppress it; thus acting upon the old principle of "do as I tell you, and not as I do," the officer denounces the

article, and at the same time conducts the sale of it to a very great extent.

A very singular practice exists in China, which we had an opportunity of witnessing at Whampoa. About the time of sunset all the ducks, which, during the day, may be seen in hundreds on the banks of the river, are collected together in the following manner: a boat, which is fitted up with a large pen upon planks extending some distance over the gunwale on each side, is stationed at a particular point in the river, and the owner of the ducks has merely to utter a well known call, which is immediately answered by a simultaneous quacking, and a general rush of ducks to the place where the man is stationed with his boat; a broad plank is then let down from the stern of the boat, up which the ducks walk into the pen, and so well are they accustomed to the sound of their owner's voice, that it rarely happens that any of them get confused with the rest, although there may be perhaps five or six different lots in the same field. Immediately upon their arriving at the boat they

are well fed, which, probably, is the cause of their readiness to come when they are called.

The operation of loading a vessel with tea, is one of great excitement, from the rapidity with which chests, weighing three quarters of a hundred weight or more, are pitched about, with as much ease and rapidity as if they weighed only a few pounds. The process of stowing it is also done with the same ease, and so accurately do the Chinamen fit them in their proper places, that it always appears that the chests were made on purpose to go into that very identical spot. Then there is the bustle which pervades the whole ship, and perhaps not the least consideration which renders all more willing at their work, is that they are then employed in taking in the cargo which is destined for home, the many pleasing associations connected with which word is of itself sufficient to make the work go easily. Then there is the anxiety to know how many more days will finish the loading, and, as it draws nearer to the close, the blocking up of each of the hatchways succes-

sively is a cause of additional joy, but when the last chest is on board, and about to be consigned to the place appointed to receive it, then the excitement is at its height, and its final fixture announcing the completion of the cargo, is hailed with a loud and hearty burst of unfeigned delight, and none but those who have experienced the feeling, can form any idea of the joy which is felt by all who then join in giving their

Hurrah for the homeward bound.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Cirencester: Printed by BAILY & JONES.

00038316

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 February, 2016